

GHOSTTM IN THE SHELL

In a world where the human mind can be programmed like a computer, at what point does the human soul end and the cybernetic machinery begin?

What does it mean to be human?

From Masamune Shirow, the creator of *Appleseed*, *Orion*, and *Dominion: Tank Police*. An epic, dystopian tale of politics, covert operations, and cyborgs with too much attitude.



£16.99

ISBN 1-85286-889-9
01699>



9 781852 868895

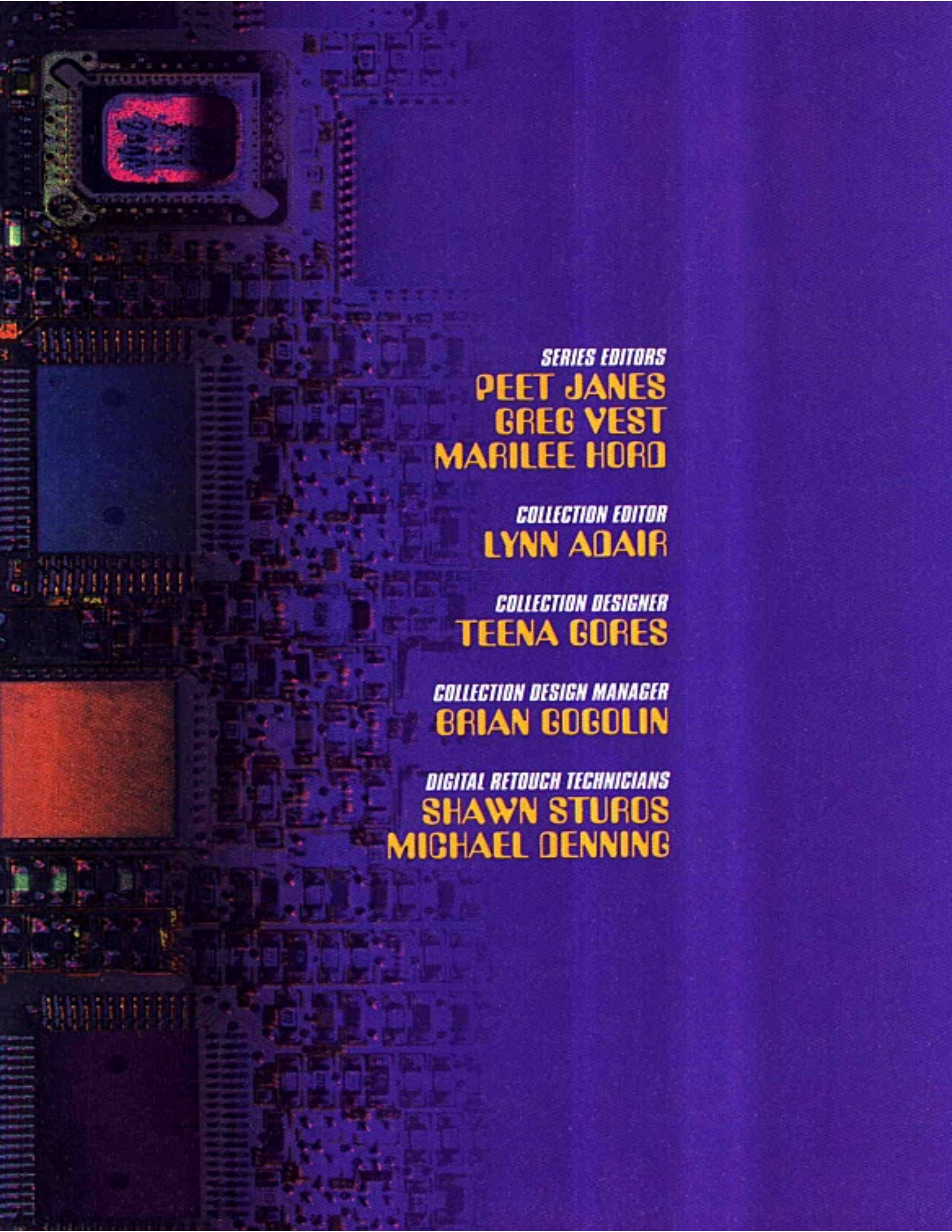
A TITAN BOOKS COLLECTION

GHOST™

IN THE SHELL



MASAMUNE SHIROW



SERIES EDITORS
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GREG VEST
MARILEE HORD

COLLECTION EDITOR
LYNN ADAIR

COLLECTION DESIGNER
TEENA GORES

COLLECTION DESIGN MANAGER
BRIAN GOGOLIN

DIGITAL RETOUCH TECHNICIANS
SHAWN STUROS
MICHAEL DENNING

GH0ST

IN THE SHELL

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
MASAMUNE SHIROW

TRANSLATED BY
FREDERIK SCHOOT
TOREN SMITH

LETTERING AND RETOUCH BY
TOM ORZECOWSKI
SUSIE LEE



TITAN BOOKS



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Published by
Titan Books Ltd.
42-44 Delben Street
London SE1 0UP

First edition
June 1997
ISBN: 1-85286-889-9

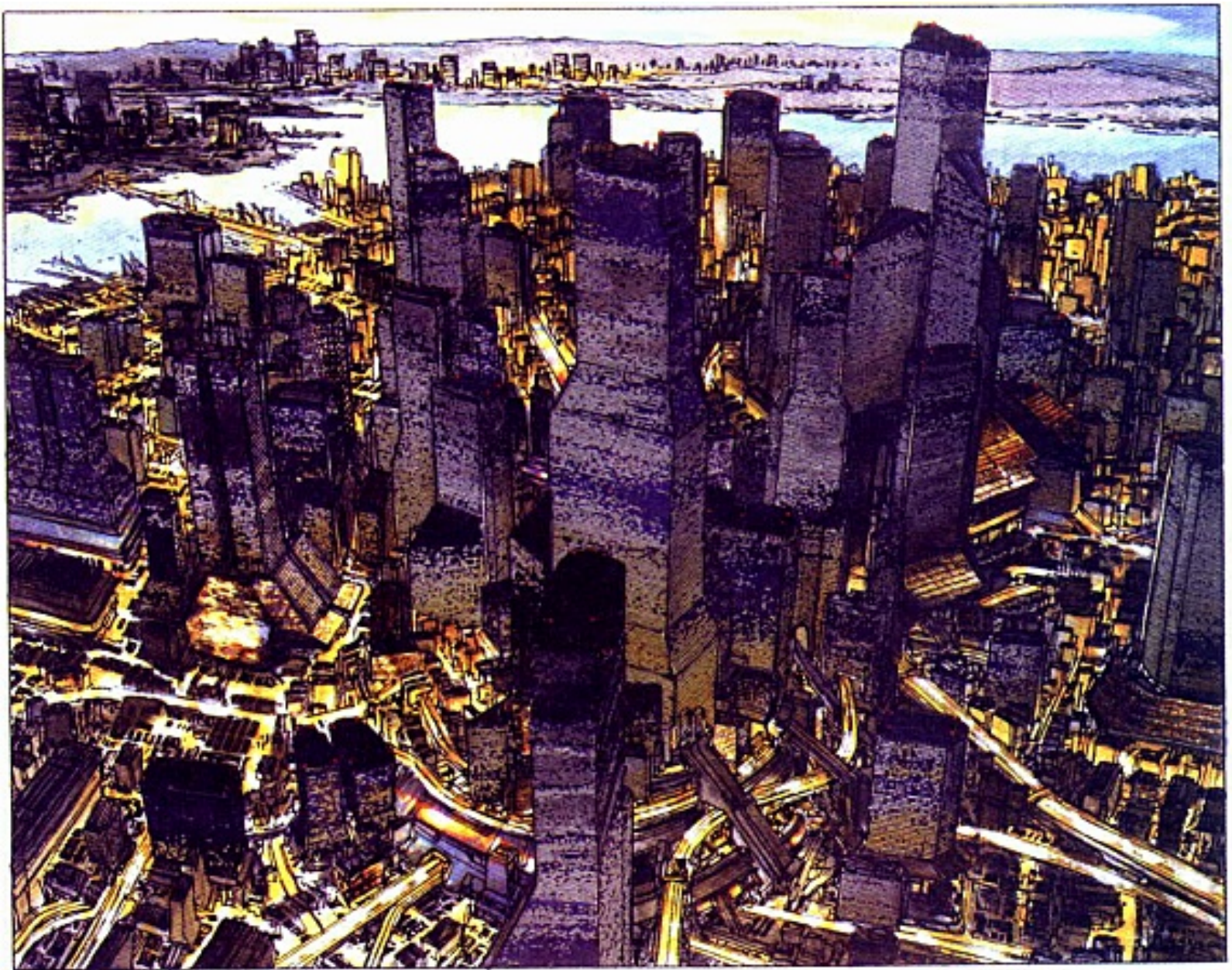
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Printed in Canada

Published by Titan Books Ltd. by arrangement
with Dark Horse Comics, Inc.

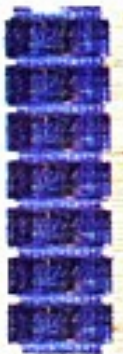
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This book collects issues one through eight of the
Dark Horse comic-book series *Ghost in the Shell*.



It is the near future. The world has become highly information-intensive, with a vast corporate network covering the planet, electrons and light pulsing through it. But the nation-state and ethnic groups still survive.

And on the edge of Asia, in a strange corporate conglomerate-state called "Japan"...

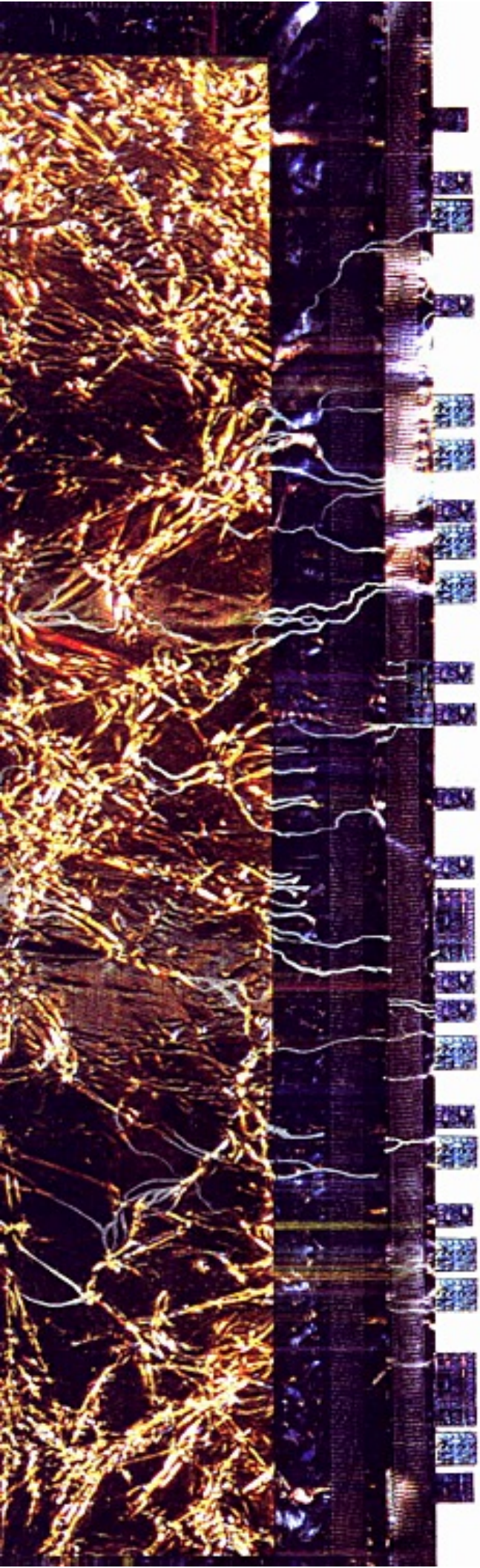


01

PROLOGUE



This is a photograph of a growth-type neurochip, created at Harima Science City in 1998 (enlarged 50,000 times). The cells are nearly dead from over-growth, and cracks in neuro-fibers can be observed throughout the chip. Neuro-fibers have grown all the way out to the chip terminals, which are made of a relative of polystyrene coated with galactose. The fibers have even warped the thin film base on which the terminals themselves are etched. In the same month that the chip was developed, vast capital corporations (largely media conglomerates) began to form a huge network in the medical world that used micro-machines as supplementary "cyber-brains." Cyberbrain technology thereafter began shifting to a micromachine base, and by the year 2028 large numbers of neurochips were in use in AI and robotics.



SO WHY
ARE WE STILL
TALKING
ABOUT
SILICON
DEPOSITS?

March 5, 2029. Newport City, a floating metropolis
in Shinhama Prefecture.



IT'S A GOOD ENOUGH
REASON FOR THE
GOVERNMENT TO
GUARANTEE THAT
IT WON'T INTERFERE
WITH YOUR NATION'S
"POLICY OF NOT
RECOGNIZING
SEPARATION AND
INDEPENDENCE."



THE EARLIER
PROMISE OF
"EXTENDING AID
IF INDEPENDENCE
IS RECOGNIZED"
WAS ONLY
MADE IN
PRINCIPLE, AND
DOES NOT
CONFLICT
WITH OUR
"TRADE."

WE'LL GO
THROUGH
A THIRD-
PARTY
NATION.

THAT'S
FINE.



AFTER ALL, IF A NATION OF SLAVES WITHHOLDS ITS SERVICES, THE MASTER NATION STARVES...

...AND A CHRONIC MANPOWER SHORTAGE WILL GIVE THE SLAVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY A SHOT IN THE ARM.

OF COURSE, IT'S DEViating A BIT FROM SOCIALISM.

I'M AMAZED AT YOUR COUNTRY... THE BRAINS CALL IT CAPITALIST, BUT IT'S REALLY AN IDEAL SOCIALIST STATE, ISN'T IT...?

LABOR CONDITIONS JUST DON'T WORK OUT THAT WAY... THE BRAINS CAN BE MANIPULATED WHEN NECESSARY WITH AN ALLOTMENT OF BLOOD...

WHERE THE HELL'S UNIT 2 ?!



THINK IT'S A TERRORIST BOMBING ?

C'MON, FOLKS-- QUIETLY AND QUICKLY!

MUST BE THE SHOCK AGAIN...

HEY, COME ON.

CITIZEN EVACUATION COMPLETED, SIR!

THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF NOISE AROUND HERE. PRESSURE'S AWFUL HIGH, TOO...

MAN, WE GOT SERIOUS HERO GON' ON!

MAJOR... SECURITY'S ALL READY TO GO...



I HEAR YOU, I HEAR YOU...

LEAVE THE DAMN CODE ENCRYPTION UP TO THE AI AND THE WHOLE WORLD'LL HEAR US...

ALL RIGHT!
CUT THE
ELECTROMAG
SHIELD!
ALL UNITS
POWER UP
COMMS!

GO GET
'EM!



WHAT THE
HELL'S
THAT
NOISE?



WE'RE SUR-
ROUNDED
BY PUBLIC
SECURITY
FORCES?
YOU'RE
KIDDING!





THE POLICE HAVE THEIR TARGET SURROUNDED, BUT IF THEY FIRE THEY'LL HIT THEIR COMRADES. I DON'T RECOMMEND TRYING THIS, DEAR READERS...

WELL, WELL... IF IT ISN'T A FAR EAST TRADE REP, AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, AND AN EXECUTIVE OF THE UNION....

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND US IMPOUNDING YOUR WEAPONS...

POLICE DAMN YOU, ARAMAKI!

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE SELF-DEFENSE AGENCY'S BEEN WATCHING ALL THIS...

AND NOW WE'VE FINALLY GOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO DECLARE YOU ALL *PERSONA NON GRATA* AND DEPORT YOU.

AND AS FOR MR. ITO, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO HAVE YOU ATTEND A LITTLE HEARING.

WE'LL NEED YOU, SIR, TO TESTIFY IN DETAIL ON THE ASSASSINATION OF OUR LATE PRIME MINISTER AND ON WHO LEAKED THE INFORMATION ABOUT HIS CONFERENCE SITE.

YOU'LL GET A SUBPOENA BEFORE THAT, ARAMAKI!

THIS'LL BE AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT!

I... I'M DEAD



PEOPLE LIKE ITO ARE KEPT AS HOSTAGES UNTIL THEY'RE OF NO USE, AND THEN EXCHANGED FOR SPIES, ETC., WHO'VE BEEN CAUGHT...



DELAYED-FUSE, SOFT-HEAD EXPLOSIVE SHELLS



2902 REFERS TO A MODIFIED MODEL BUILT IN THE YEAR 2029.

The following day, the woman (a female model cyborg) was seated in the office of the Minister of Internal Affairs



... with an assassination order issued by the former prime minister.

The only thing certain was that there had been a need to resolve a crisis and that the woman (or women) known as Major Motoko Kusanagi (obviously an alias) was extremely talented.

02

SUPER SPARTAN

10.4.2029



©1989 4
by MASAMUNE
SHIROU



breep beep

TIME TO
GET TO
WORK,
MAJOR.

I WANT
YOU TO
JOIN *SUISEN*
IN SOUTH
SHINHAMA,
WARD 4,
AND STAND
BY.

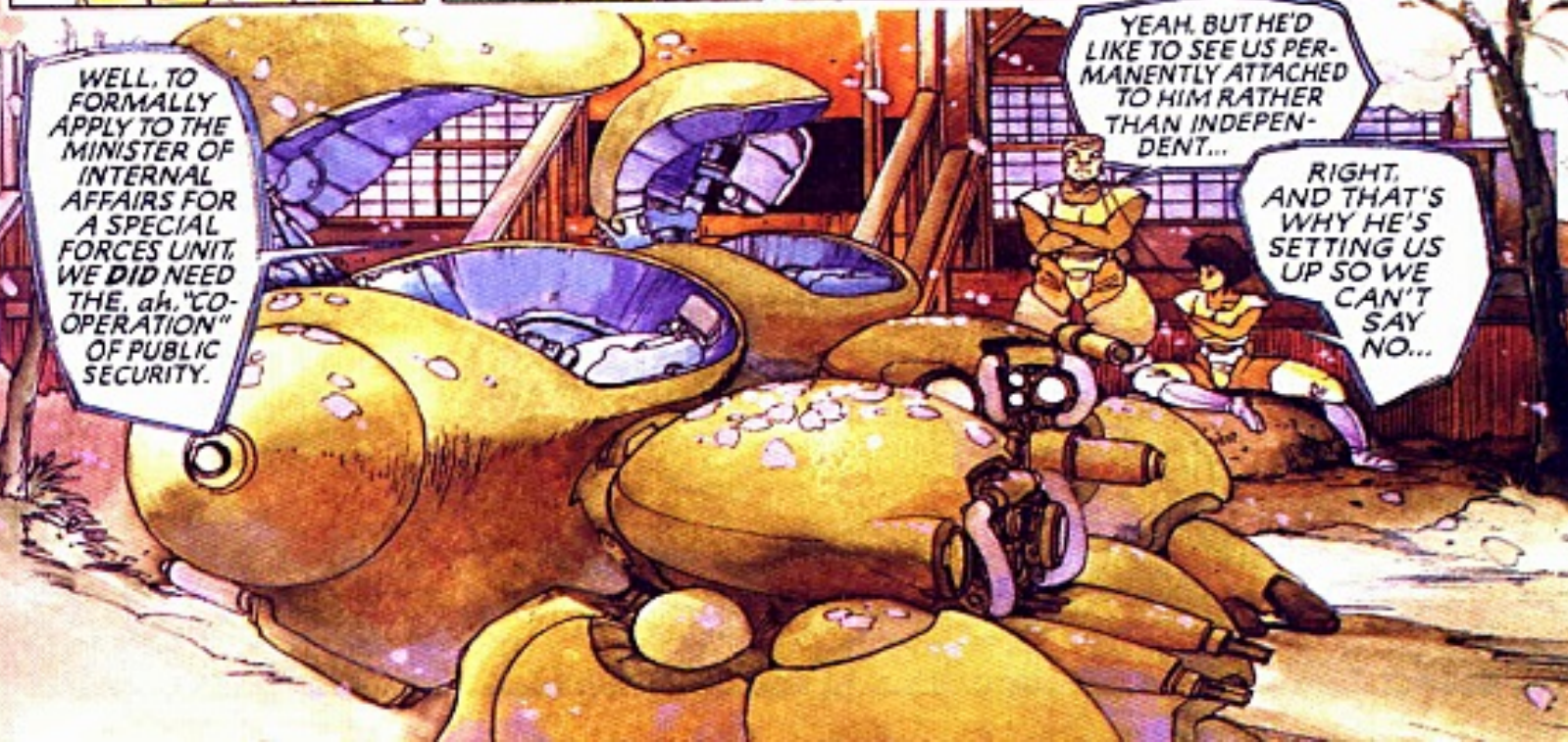
"WORK."
?!
WHAT'S
THAT?

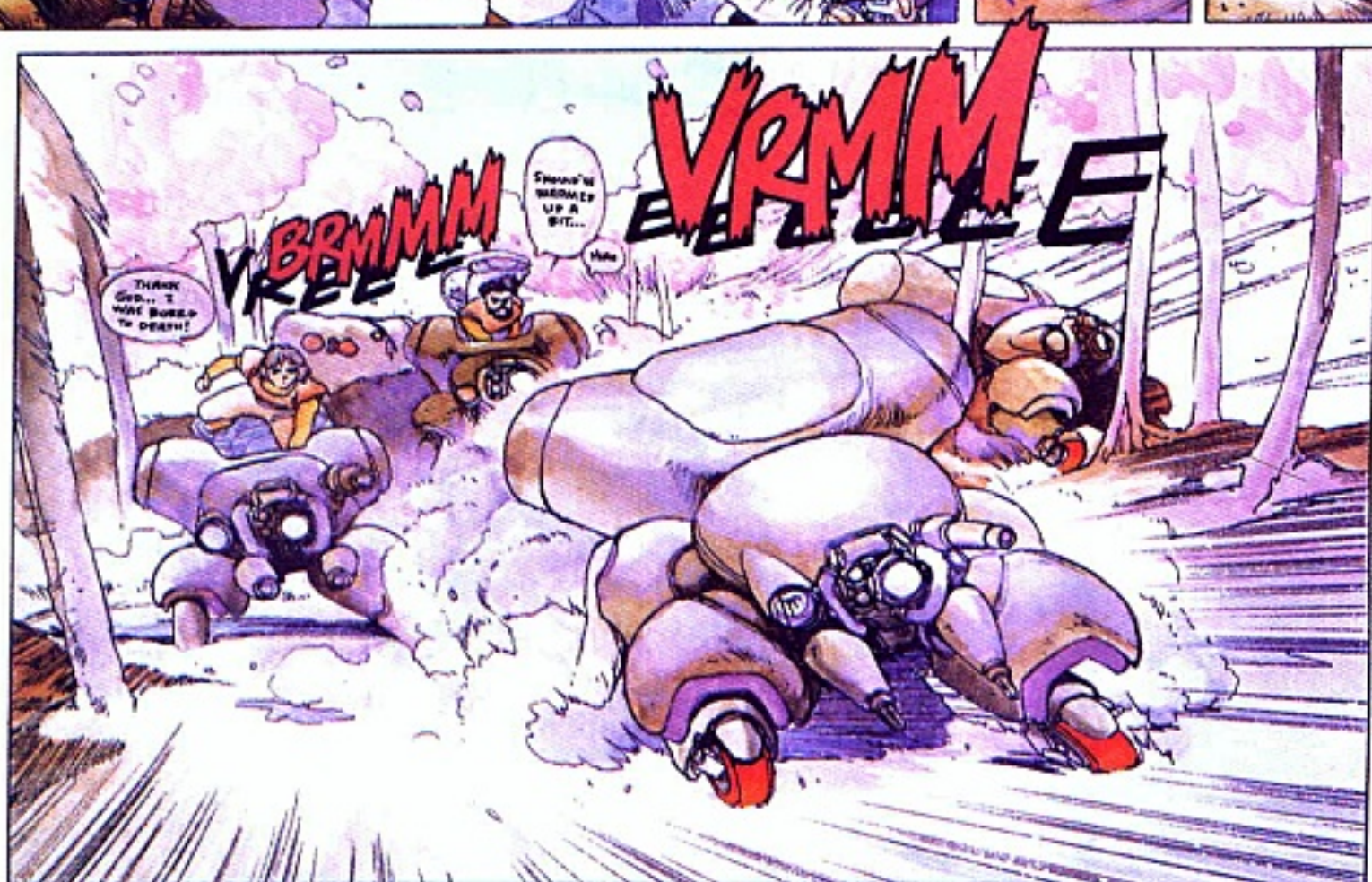
THE BUDGET YOU
IDIOTS ASKED FOR
PASSED, SO GET
YOUR BUTTS
IN GEAR!

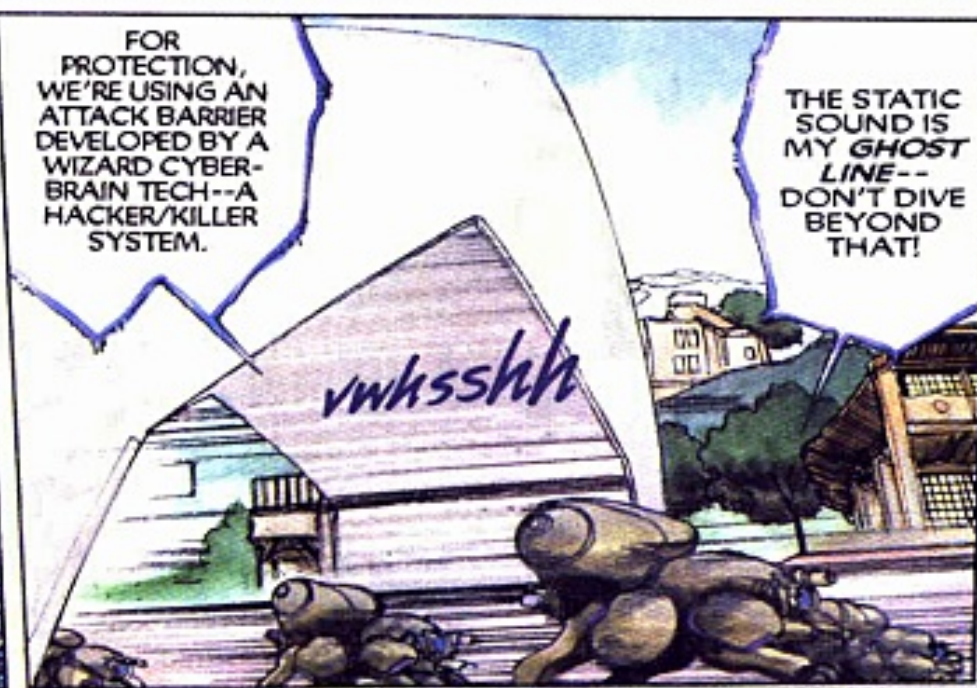
HEY,
FUCHI-
KOMA!
GOT THE CON-
FIRMATION
?

**N-NO,
MA'AM!**

WELL
THEN,
GET ON
WITH IT!







BLUB
BLUB
BLUB

SLIK

either the
self-defense
forces or the
public security
bureau...

the minister
of internal
affairs says,
network...

returning
to the
self-defense
forces and...

the public
security bureau...

what? you
say you want
work unless there's a
budget for the formation
of an international
anti-terrorism unit?
contribute to the
establishment of the
thousand-year kingdom plan...

DAMN,
THERE'S A
LOT OF NOISE IN
YOUR
BRAIN,
MAJOR...

HEY,
I'M
ON
MY
PERIOD!

MAJOR,
YOUR PROS-
THETIC
HAND
HURTS
A BIT,
DOESN'T
IT...

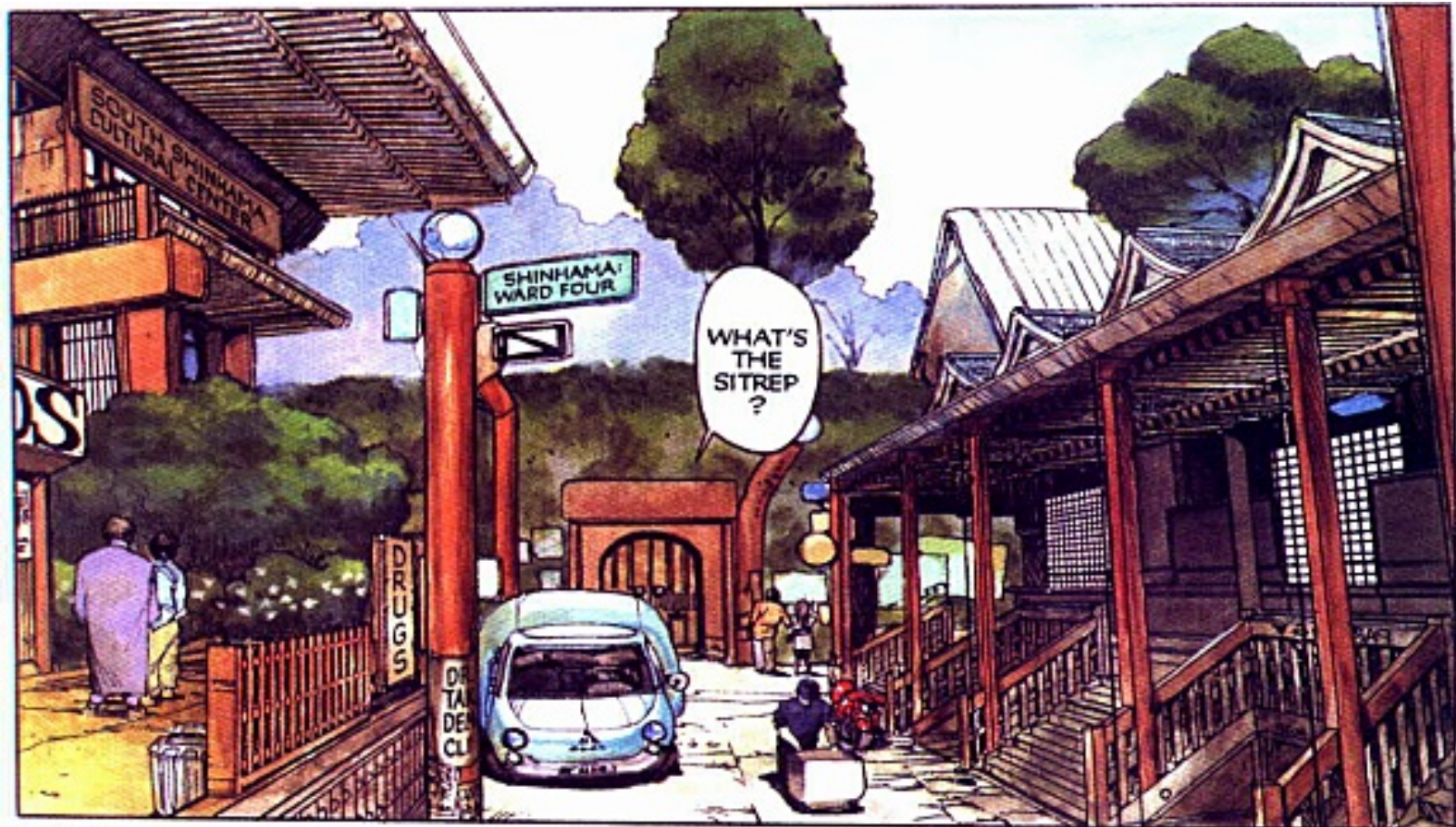
WHAT'S
THIS BITTER
TASTE...
YOU TAKING
A TRANQUIL-
IZER?

OKAY,
GUYS, YOU
GOT YOUR
DATA-NOW,
ANYBODY
NOT CLEARED
OUT IN TWO
SECONDS
GETS
BRAIN-
BURNED!

DAMN!
THE
BASTARDS
DOVE CLOSE
TO MY
GHOST.

THAT'S
WHY I HATE
LETTING THOSE
INSENSITIVE
BRUTES
INTO MY
BRAIN...

VREEE





WELL THEN, YOU DON'T NEED US...

SEE YA LATER...



BUT THEY'VE GOT A GHOST CONTROLLER, MAJOR-- A BRAIN WASHER.

HC-25



HOW ANACHRONISTIC...!



THIS RELIEF CENTER'S KNOWN FOR THE WIDE VARIETY OF TALENTED PEOPLE IT PRODUCES.

POLITICIANS, CRITICS, CRIMINALS, ETC....

PRETTY MUCH ALL THE SAME...

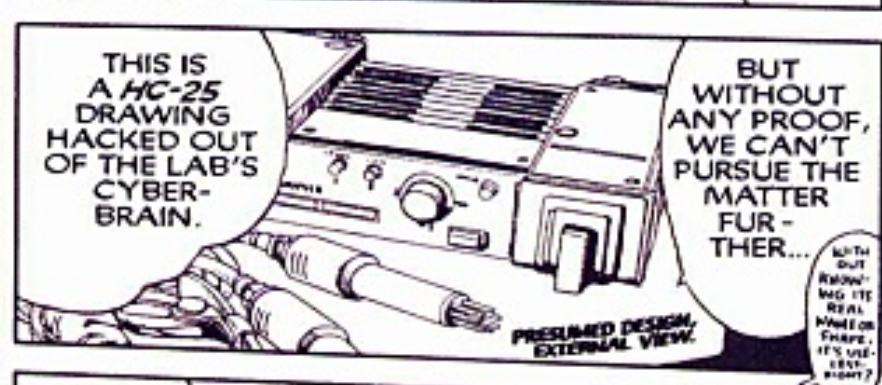


AT THE PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU THEY CALL IT A "HUMAN FACTORY"...

THEY NEED IT, BUT A FEW BAD APPLES CAN CREATE A REAL SOCIAL PROBLEM...



HAH... YOU MEAN THE BAD APPLES ARE AFRAID OF BAD APPLES?



THIS IS A HC-25 DRAWING HACKED OUT OF THE LAB'S CYBER-BRAIN.

BUT WITHOUT ANY PROOF, WE CAN'T PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER...

SO THE ONLY REASON WE'RE HERE IS BECAUSE IT'S A REAL MESS. IT'S USELESS, RIGHT?



"B&E"...?

"WET-WORK"...?

beep beep

NO! NOTHING LIKE THAT !!



THE GOAL
HERE IS TO
BE ABLE TO
TAKE CARE
OF THE
PROBLEM
AND TO
"ARREST"
THEM IF
NEED
BE...

TO
"OFFICIALLY"
DO THAT
WITHOUT
ANY
EVIDENCE
OR AN
ARREST
WARRANT?



SO WHY
DO THEY
HAVE
IT
HERE...?

THEY'VE
TRIED TO
GET A
HACKER
IN AND
FAILED,
EH?

TOO
MUCH
FOR
ME...



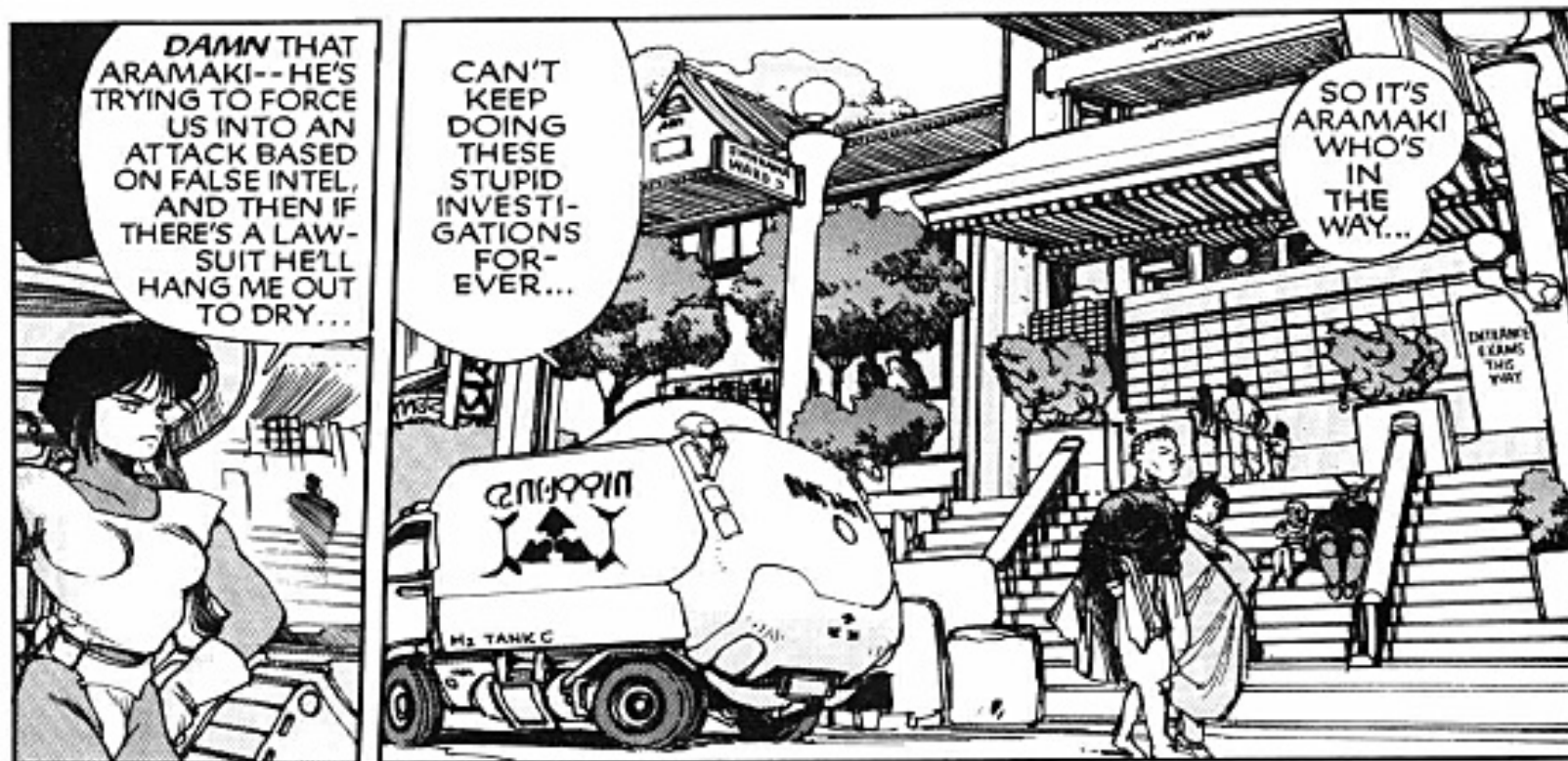
DO YOU
WANT TO
SYNCHRO-
DIVE AND
CHECK?



THE CENTRAL
CYBER-BRAIN
BARRIER HERE
IS A COMPLEX
MAZE OF
SIMULATED
EXPERIENCES,
SO THEY
COULDN'T
INFILTRATE IT,
BUT THEY
DEFINITELY
GOT A HIT.

THE MANAGER
OF THE DUPLICATE
CODE KEY FOR THE
LAB'S CENTRAL
CYBERBRAIN IS
FROM HERE,
AFTER ALL...

COURSE
HE'S
MISSING
NOW,
THOUGH.



DAMN THAT
ARAMAKI-- HE'S
TRYING TO FORCE
US INTO AN
ATTACK BASED
ON FALSE INTEL,
AND THEN IF
THERE'S A LAW-
SUIT HE'LL
HANG ME OUT
TO DRY...

CAN'T
KEEP
DOING
THESE
STUPID
INVESTIGATIONS
FOR-EVER...

SO IT'S
ARAMAKI
WHO'S
IN THE
WAY...

ENTRANCE
EXAMS
THIS
WAY



DISCIPLINE



Oh, our teacher is so kind...



Oh, our meals are so fine... our beds so fluffy... our work so fun...



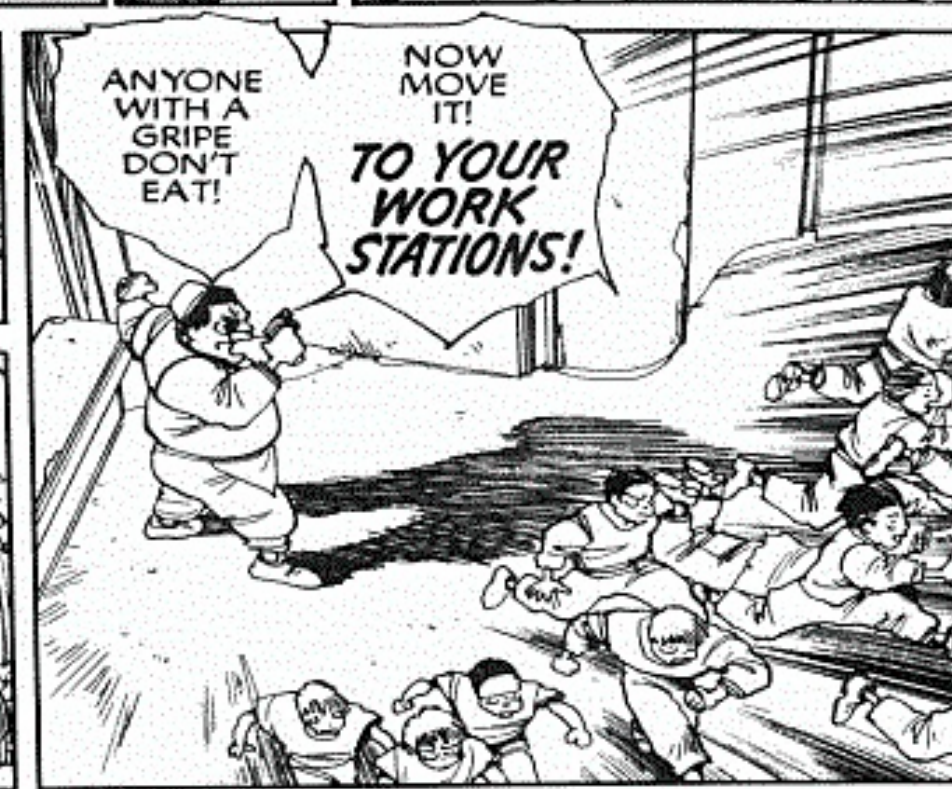
Porridge every day last year, this year and next year too. Oh, I'm so lucky...



Thank you so much, school-master...



Yes, thank you indeed, kind sir...



NOW
HEAR
THIS
!

I LET YOU
EAT AND WORK
AND SLEEP, AND
NOW IT'S TIME
TO EARN
YOUR KEEP!!

AHGG...

MY
HAND
!

N-NO.

OUCH

WONDER
WHY THE
HUMAN
RIGHTS
AGENCY
DOESN'T
RAISE
A FUSS
ABOUT
THIS...

BECAUSE THE
WATER FILTERS
THE KIDS ARE
MAKING ARE
MORE IMPOR-
TANT THAN
HUMAN
RIGHTS,
THAT'S WHY.
HEY, PEOPLE
ARE CRUEL.



IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WORK, TAKE THE EDUCATION COURSE. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DO EITHER, I WON'T APPLY FOR YOUR CITIZENSHIP PAPERS FOR YOU!

YOU WANNA DIE HOMELESS ?!

THE EDUCATION COURSE...

FORGET IT-- THEY SAY IT'S WORSE THAN HERE, THAT THEY TURN YOU INTO A VEGETABLE...

I WISH I'D NEVER BEEN BORN...

WHAT KINDA LIFE IS THIS... ?

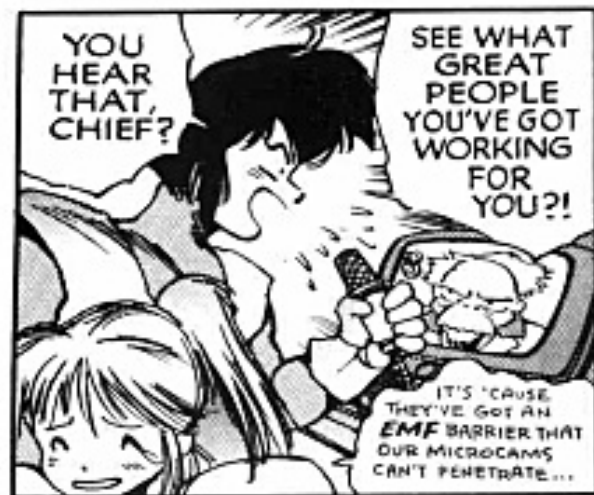


GOT ANY IMAGES OF THE "EDUCATION COURSE" ?

NOPE. THERE AREN'T ANY.



WHAT ?



YOU HEAR THAT, CHIEF?

SEE WHAT GREAT PEOPLE YOU'VE GOT WORKING FOR YOU?!

IT'S 'CAUSE THEY'VE GOT AN EMF BARRIER THAT OUR MICROCAMS CAN'T PENETRATE...



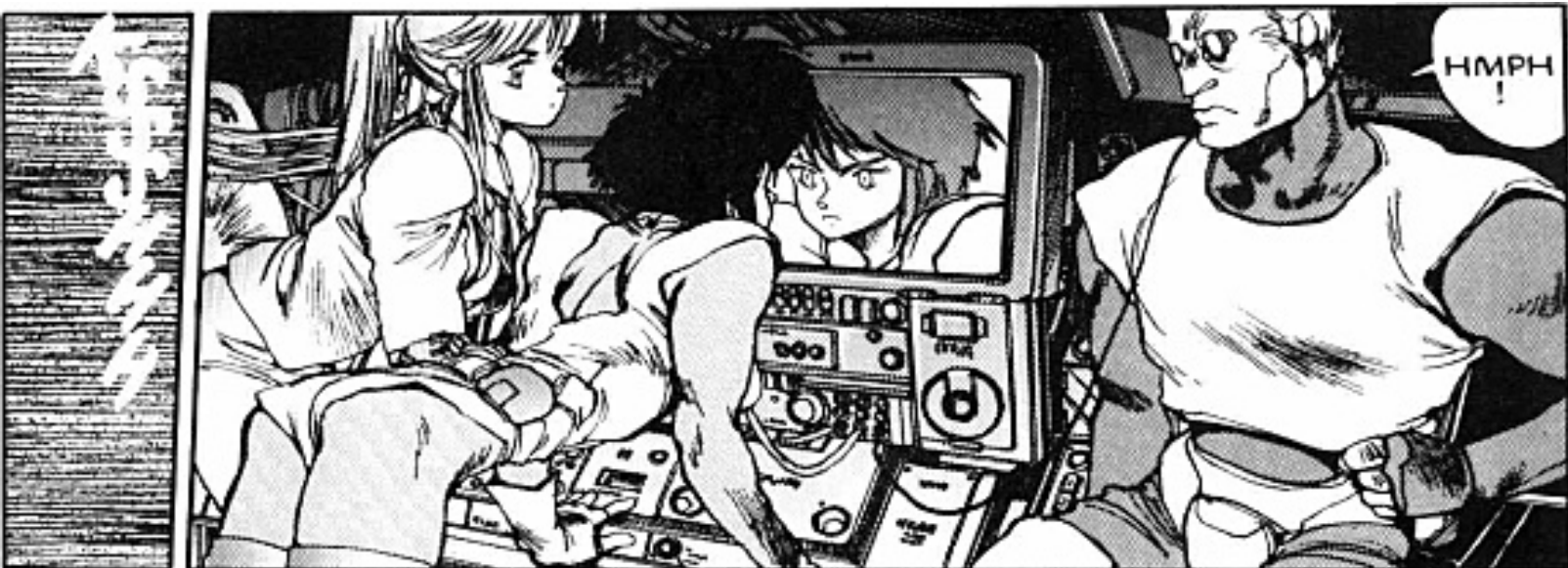
LISTEN, MAJOR...

WHY DON'T YOU CUT THE PISSING AND MOANING, AND JUST COME OVER TO SECURITY.



MAJOR, WE'VE FINALLY GOT A FEED ON THE EDUCATION COURSE ON TAP 4...







TOGUSA,
ISHIKAWA--
I WANT
YOU TO
PLANT A
MINI-SPIDER
IN THE KID
WHO
ESCAPED!



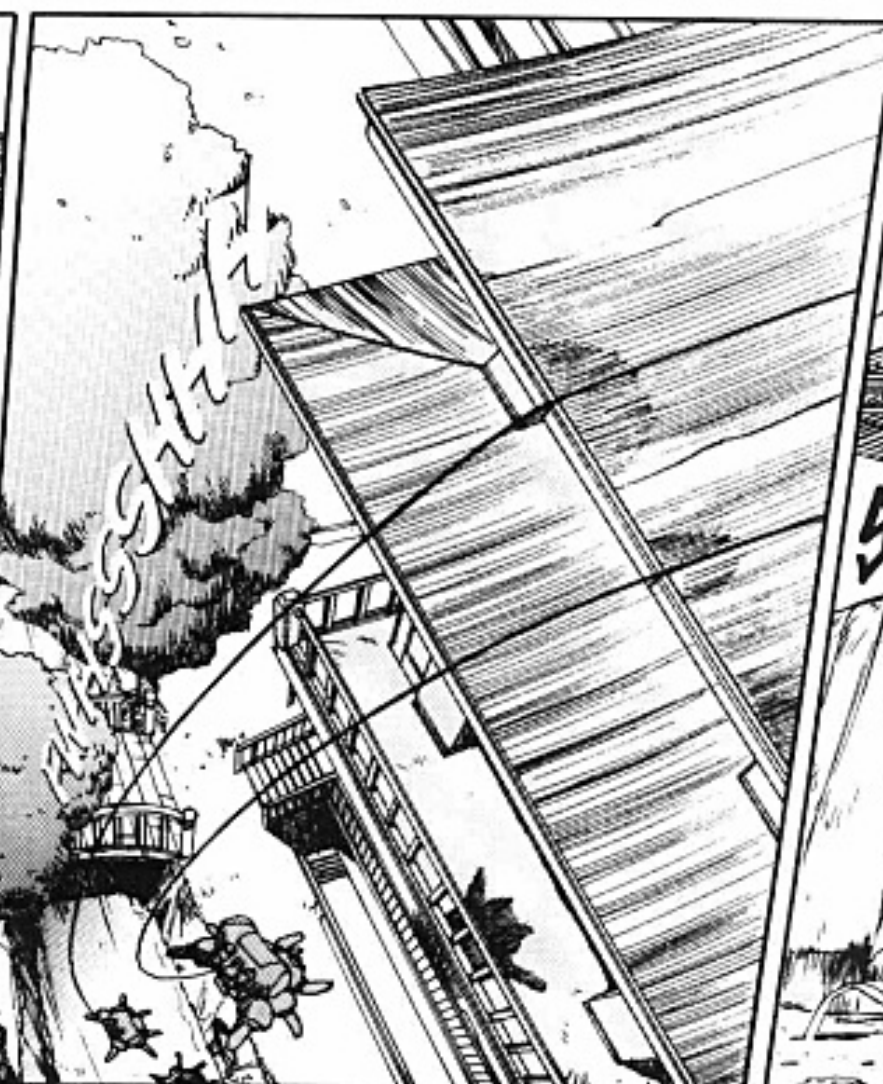
IN A WORST
CASE SITUATION,
THIS'LL AT LEAST
GIVE US AN
EXCUSE. GOOD
THINKING,
EH?

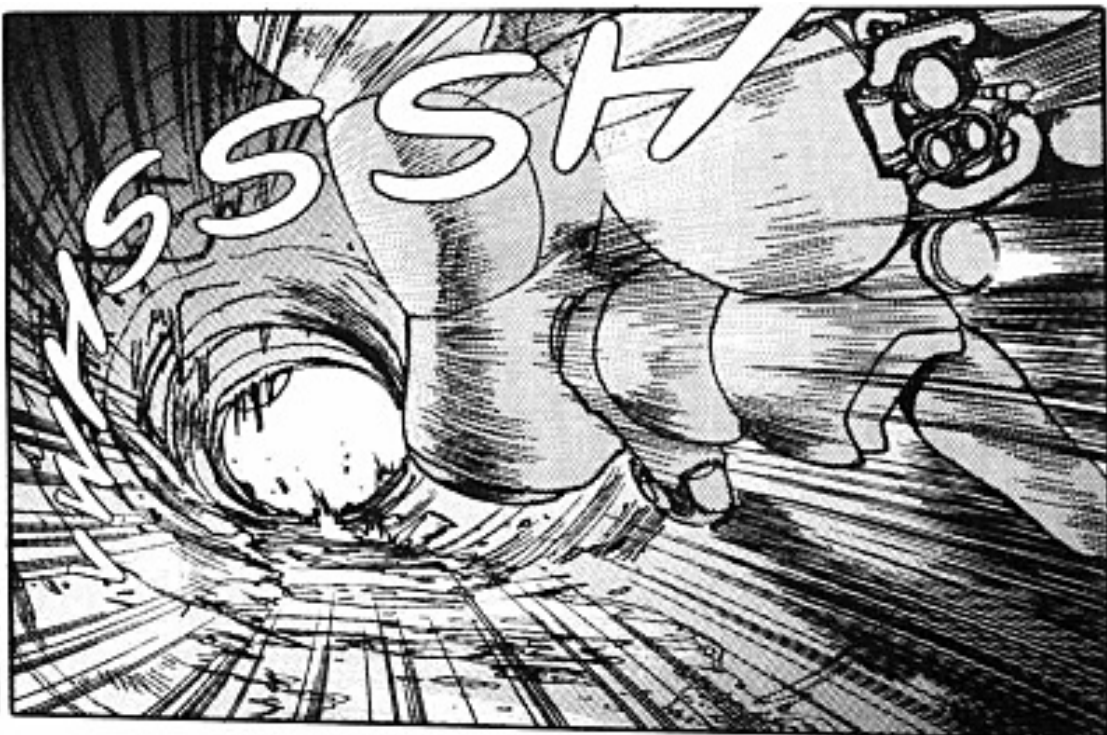
SO YOU'LL TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY,
AND RETIRE FROM
THE SCENE SO
THE SQUAD'LL
BE ABLE TO
CONTINUE,
RIGHT?

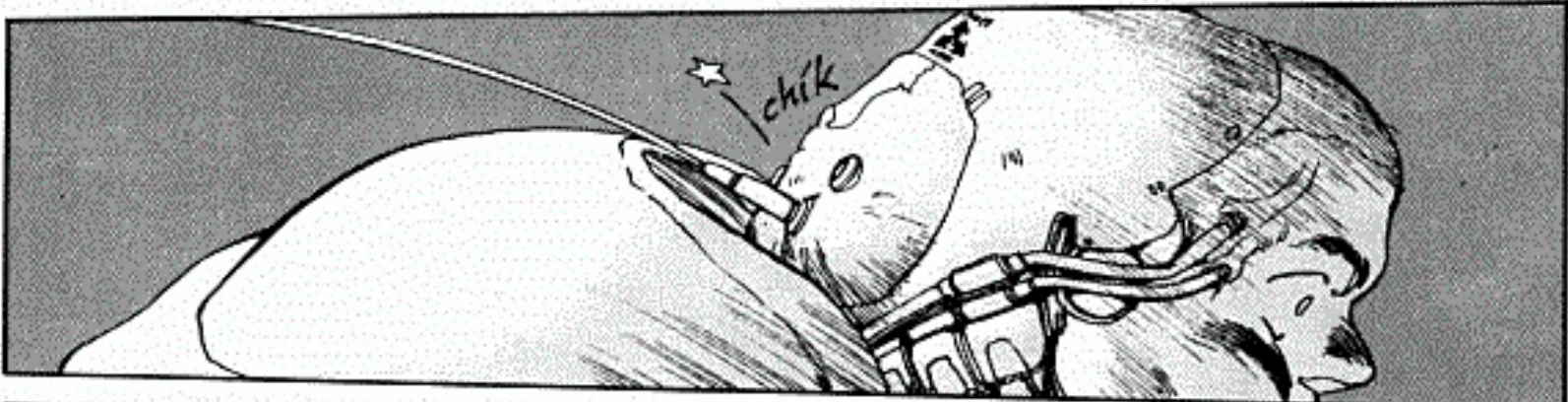
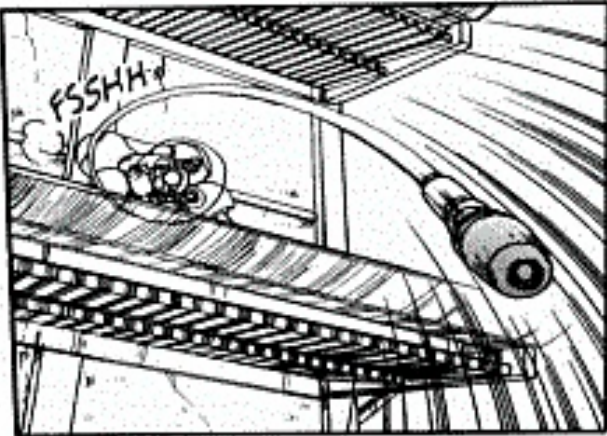
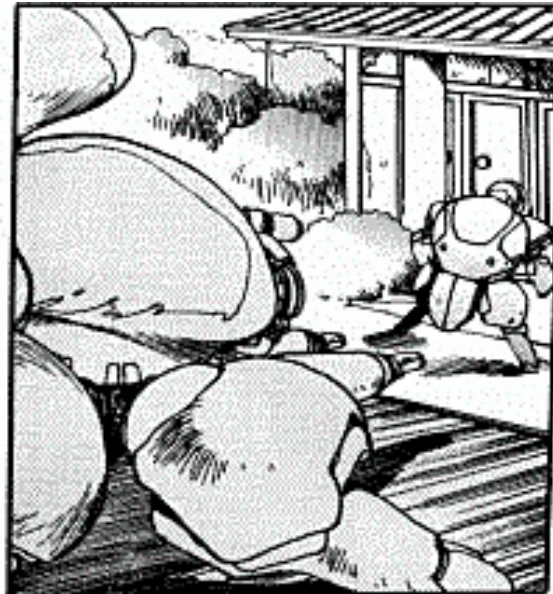


DON'T
COUNT
ON
IT.

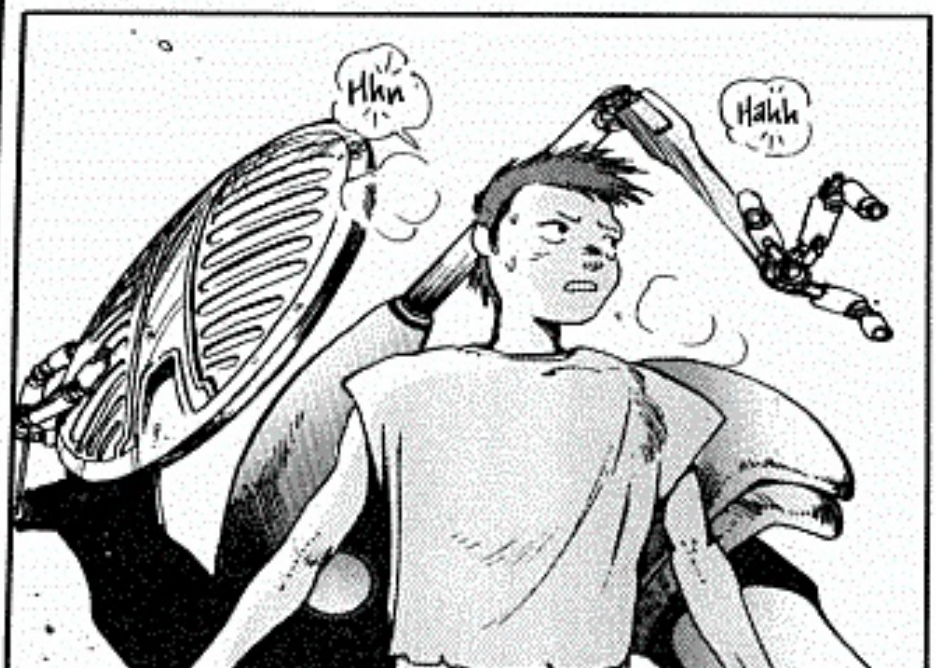
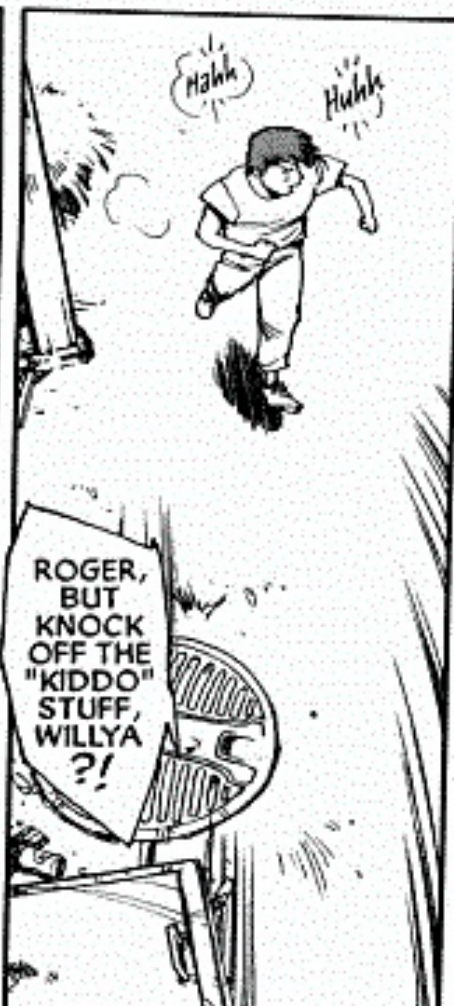
'COURSE
I APPRE-
CIATE
THE SEN-
TIMENT,
THOUGH.

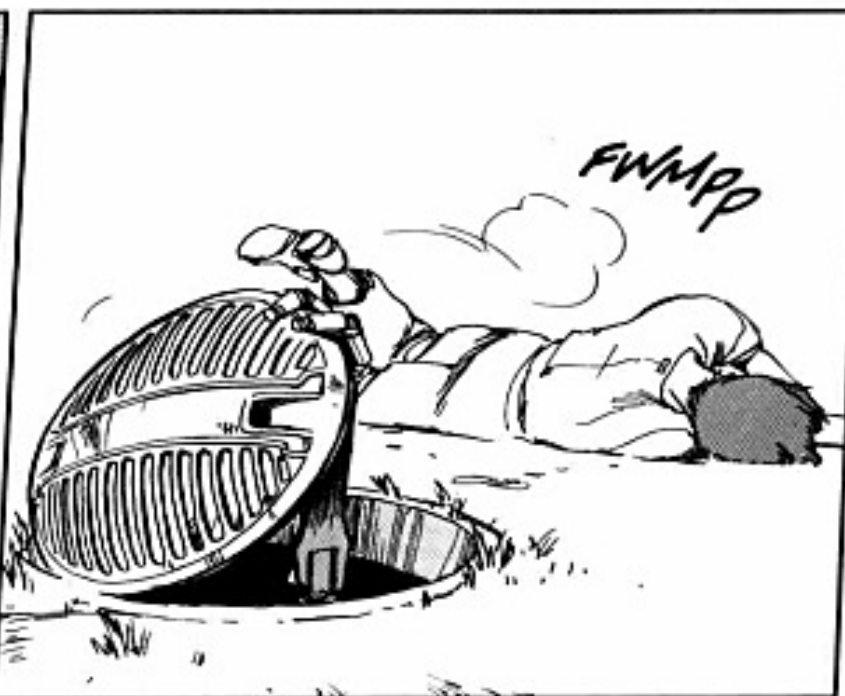


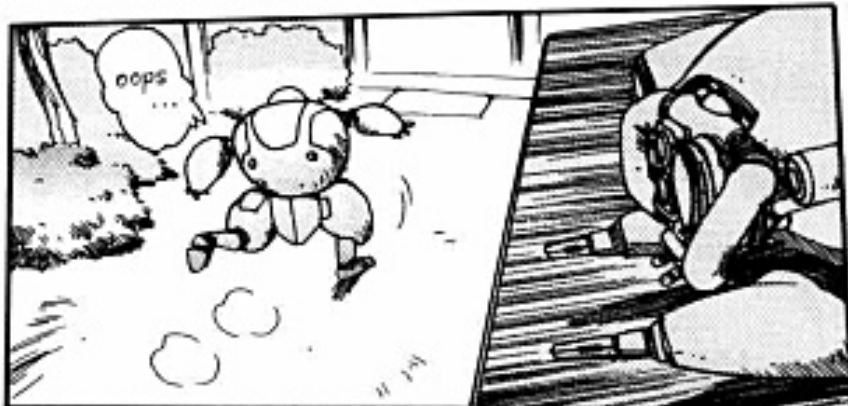
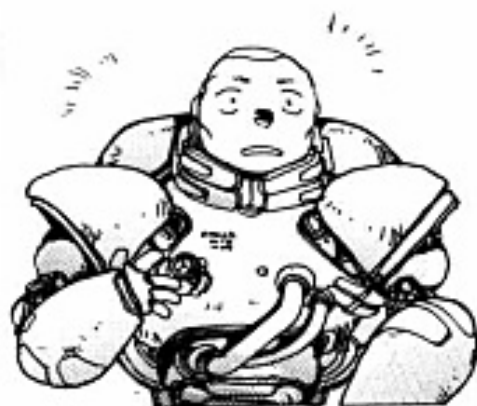




THEIR
SECURITY'LL
"SLEEP"
FOR 25
SECONDS.
YOU GOT
THAT,
KIDDO
?







MAJOR...
THE GUARD
IS A HEAVILY
MODIFIED TYPE
2033 FROM
SAGAWA HEAVY
INDUSTRIES...

IT'S ONE
OF THOSE
CUSTOM
UNITS
ORDERED BY
THE GROUND
SELF-
DEFENSE
FORCE'S
TECH
DIVISION.





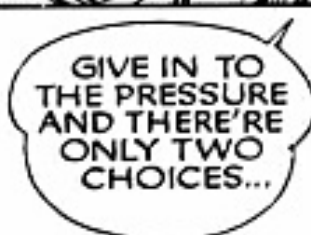
THREE
ESCAPE
ATTEMPTS
AND THEY
BRAIN-
WASH
HIM...



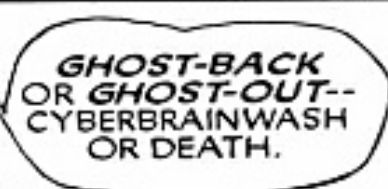
POOR
KID...



HE
KNOWS
THE RULES.
THIS IS A
SUICIDE
ATTEMPT...



GIVE IN TO
THE PRESSURE
AND THERE'RE
ONLY TWO
CHOICES...



*GHOST-BACK
OR GHOST-OUT--
CYBERBRAINWASH
OR DEATH.*



SO
THIS IS A
*GOVERN-
MENT*
BRAIN-
WASH
CENTER...

WHY THE
HELL DOES
SECURITY
WANT US
TO DO AN
OFFICIAL
INVESTI-
GATION...

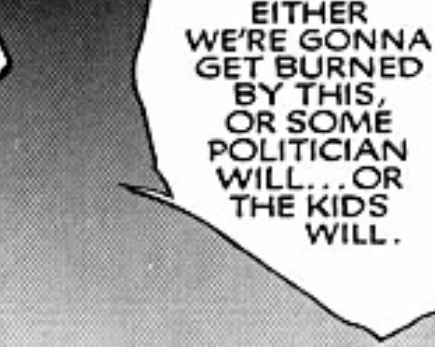


IT'S A TRAP,
MAJOR. APE-
FACE PROBABLY
NEVER GAVE
YOU THE ORDER.
HELL, IT'S
PROBABLY ALL
A VR SIM...

GET REAL,
BATOU--MY
BARRIER
ELEMENTS
AREN'T
THAT
CHEAP
!



WELL, EITHER WAY, CHARGING IN THERE'LL CREATE A REAL SCANDAL...



EITHER WE'RE GONNA GET BURNED BY THIS, OR SOME POLITICIAN WILL... OR THE KIDS WILL.



OKAY, MEN! PREPARE TO ATTACK!

OH MY! GHOST!

IF THE BRAIN-WASH MECH GETS IN THE WAY, WE'LL TAKE IT OUT!



UNITS LIKE OURS ARE ALWAYS NECESSARY, SO WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO LOSE.

A SCANDAL OP, WITH POLITICIANS DETHRONED AND KIDS BRAIN-WASHED...

WE MADE A DEAL WITH APE-FACE TO GET RID OF THE ASSHOLES WHO PULL THIS KIND OF SHIT.



SO LET'S DO IT!

KSHH

KSSHH

FSHHH



A LITTLE VOICE IS URGING ME ON...

MY GHOST!





HMM...
THIS IS
ODD...

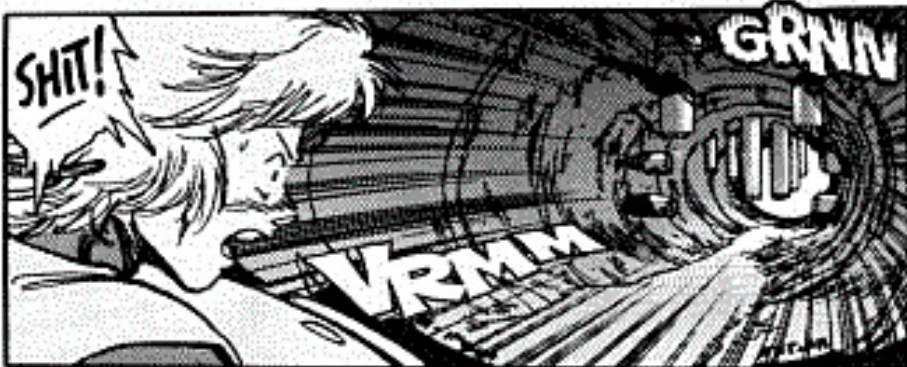
DO YOU
SUPPOSE
I FRIED
AN
AI?

THAT
MEANS
WE'RE NOT
UP AGAINST
A HACKER
FOOLING
AROUND.
WE'RE
DEALING
WITH A
PRO!

HOW'D
THEY
KNOW IT
WAS THE
SEWER?

WAS
THERE
AN INFO
LEAK?
OR IS IT
A TRAP
AFTER
ALL?!

THERE
WAS NO
RESISTANCE
WHEN HIS
GHOST
WAS FRIED...



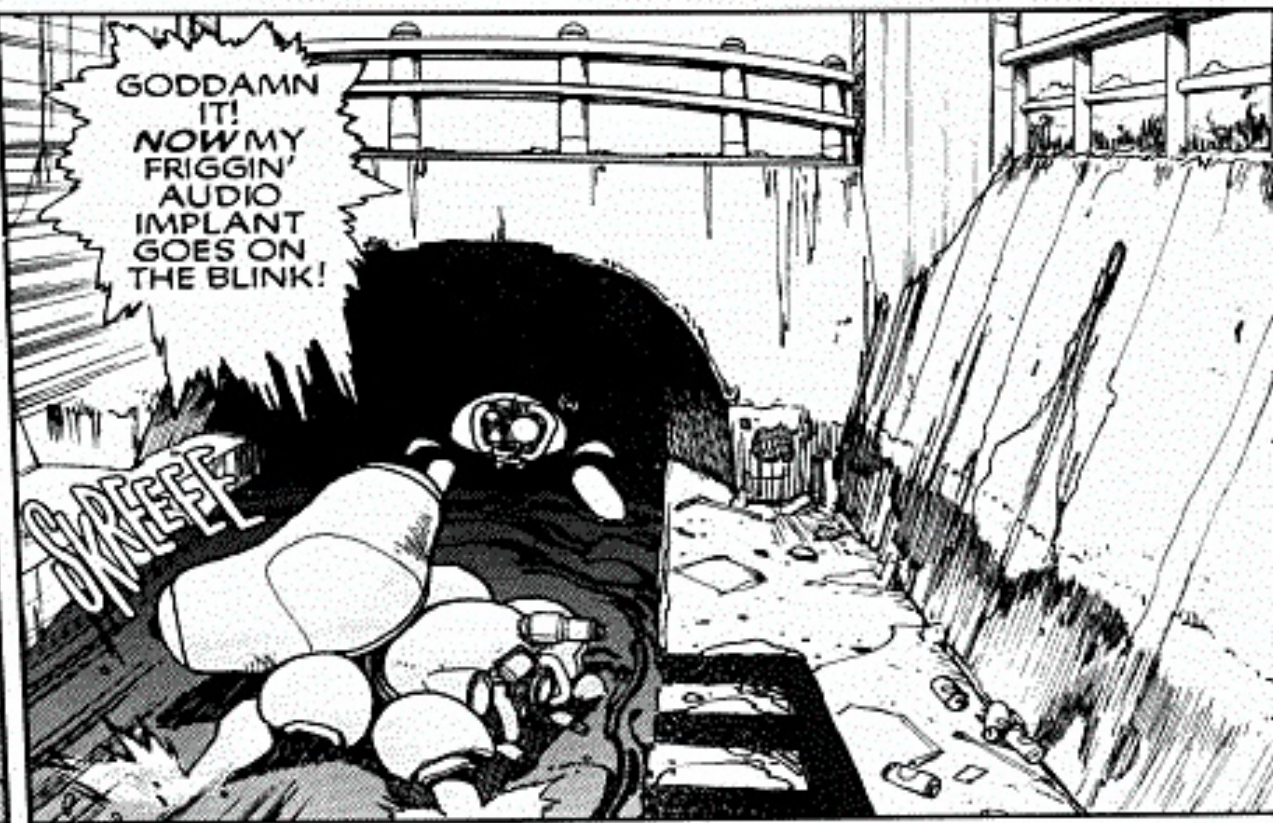
TOGUSA
?
HEY,
WHAT
HAP--

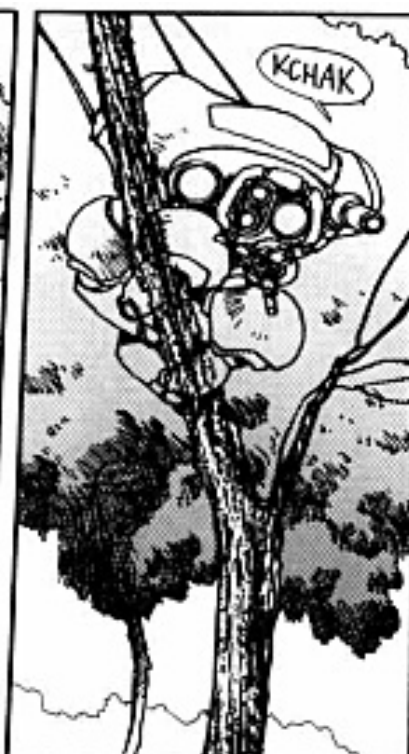
OWW!
W!

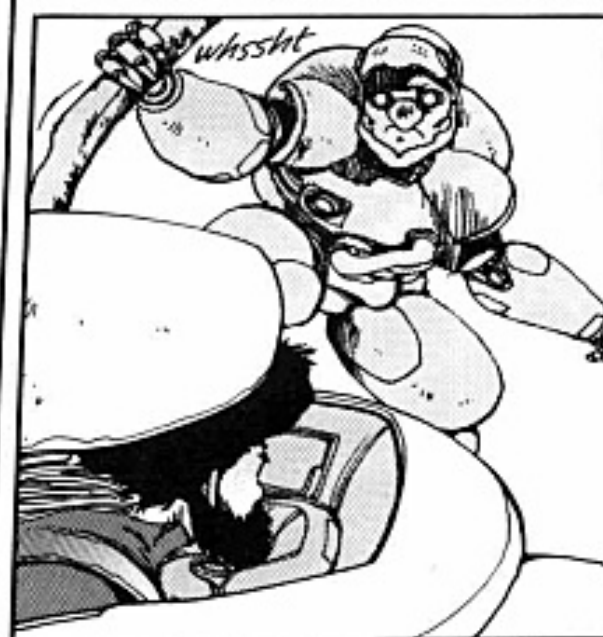
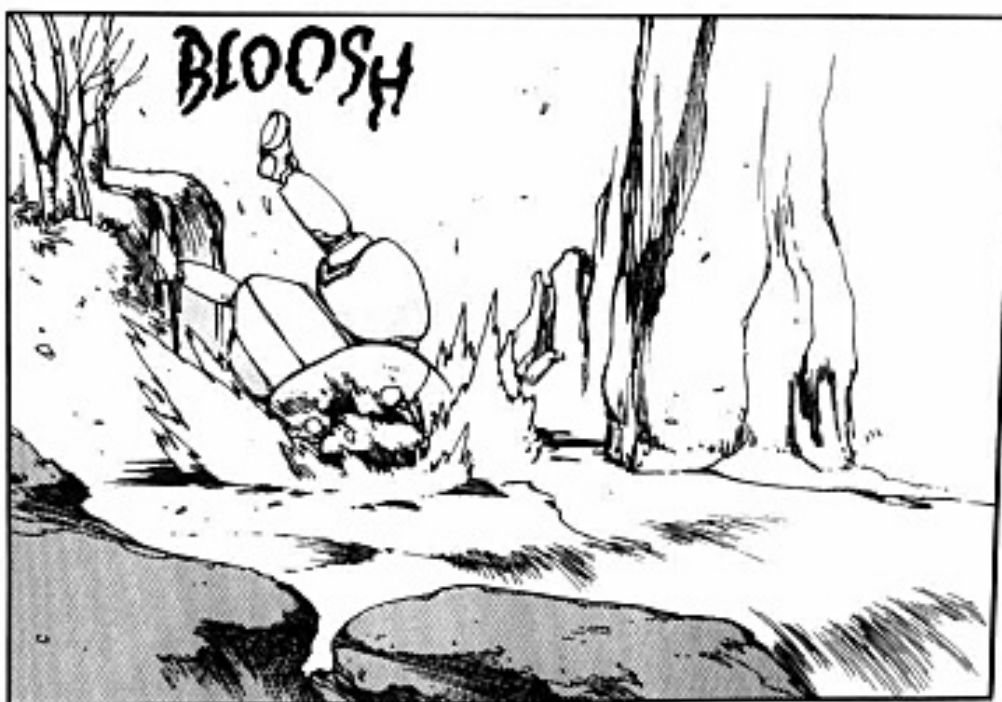
KZKK
ZKK

GODDAMN
IT!
NOW MY
FRIGGIN'
AUDIO
IMPLANT
GOES ON
THE BLINK!

SKREEE









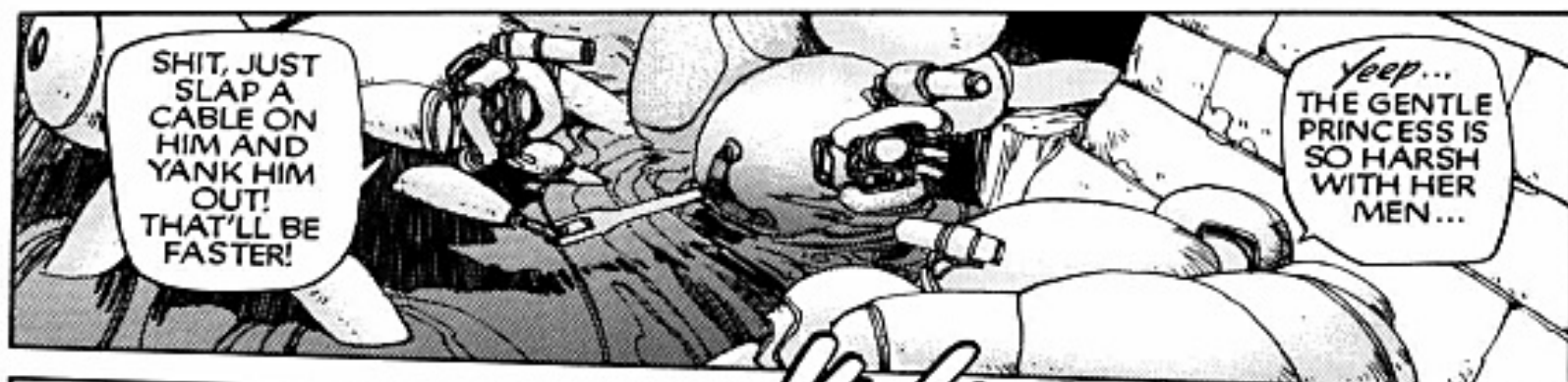
TOGUSA LOOKS A LITTLE BENT OUTTA SHAPE, MAJOR...



WELL, HELP HIM AND GET OUT OF THERE!

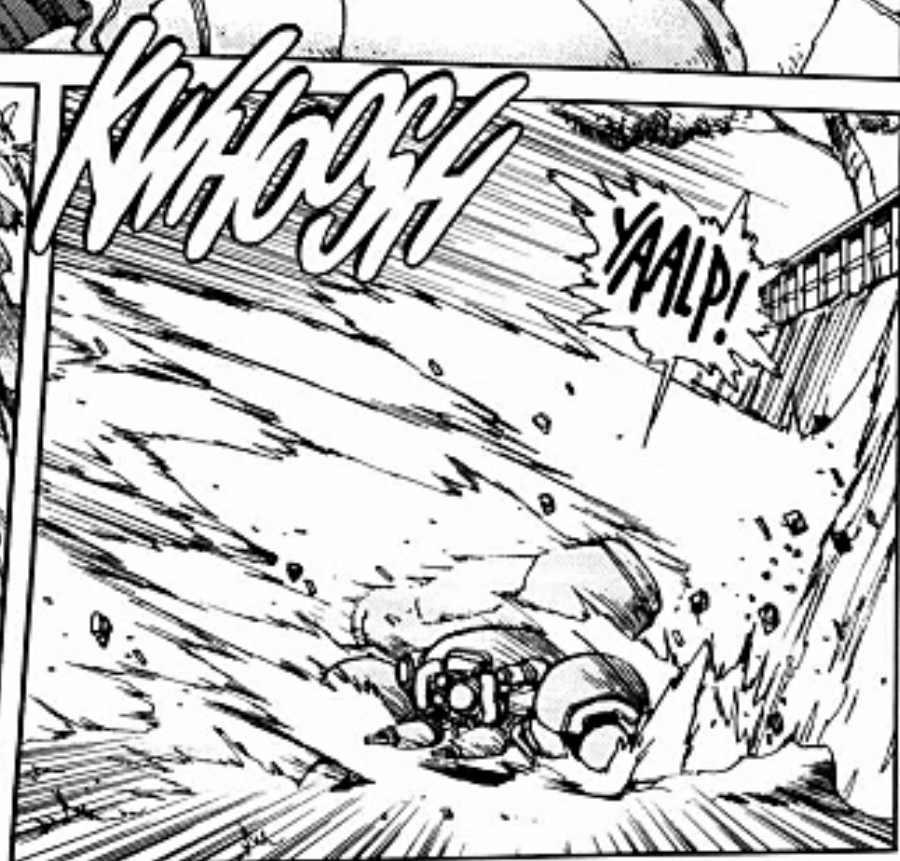
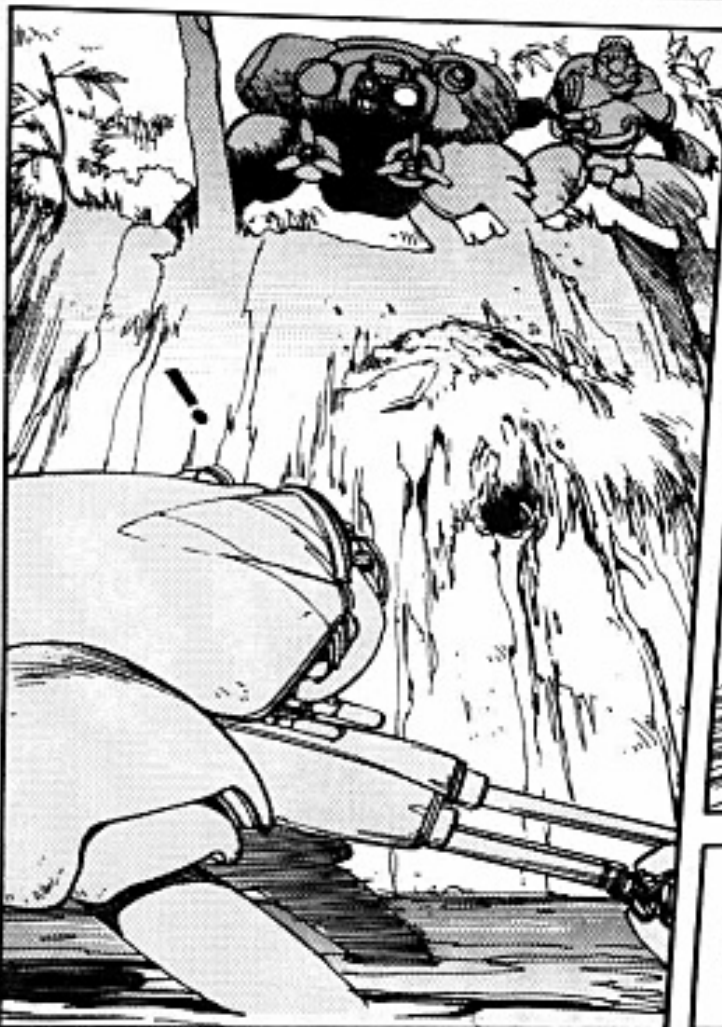
WE'RE GOING OUT-SIDE?

OF COURSE, STUPID! WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'RE DOING ?!!



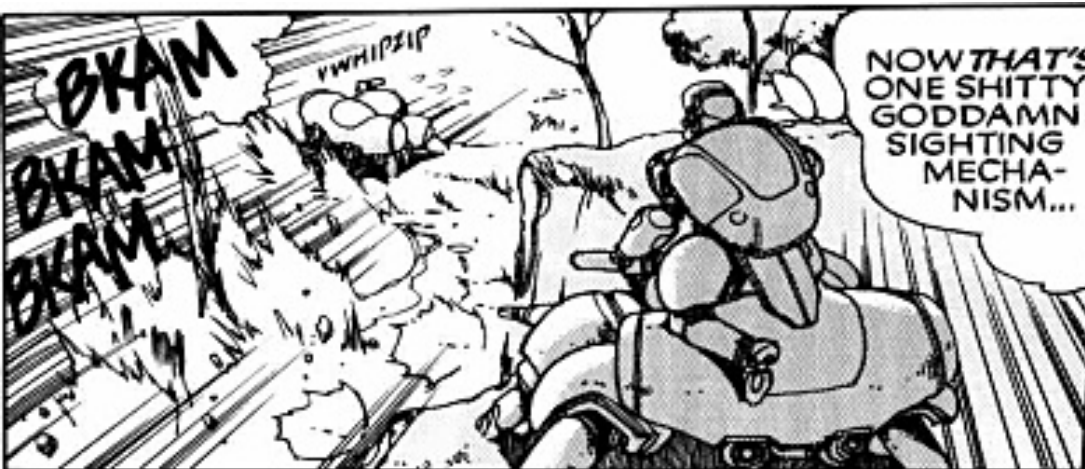
SHIT, JUST SLAP A CABLE ON HIM AND YANK HIM OUT! THAT'LL BE FASTER!

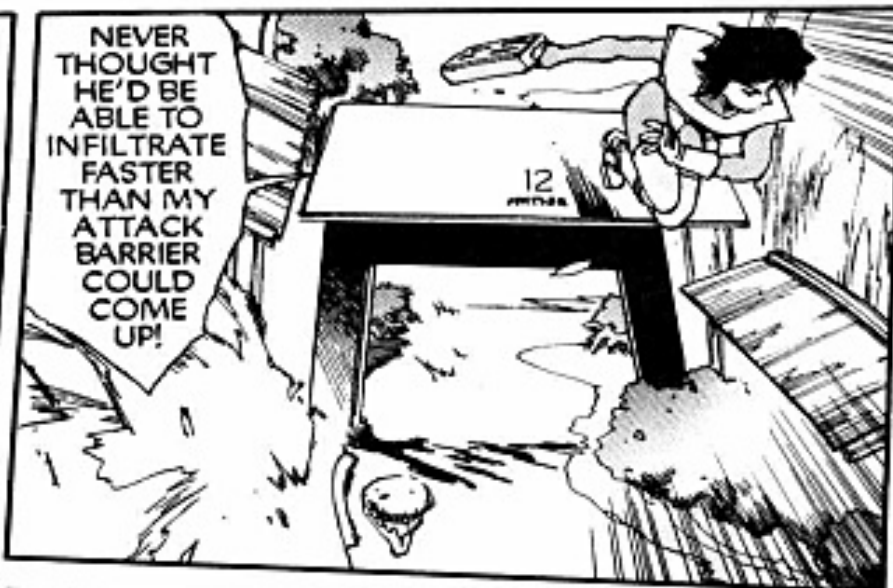
Yeep... THE GENTLE PRINCESS IS SO HARSH WITH HER MEN...



HEY! ISN'T THAT ISHIKAWA'S FUCHIKOMA?

WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?







SHIT, THAT WAS CLOSE! GOOD THING I HAD MY ACTIVE PROTECTOR SUIT ON... I'VE GOTTA WIPE THAT WEIRDO SQUAD LEADER BROAD...

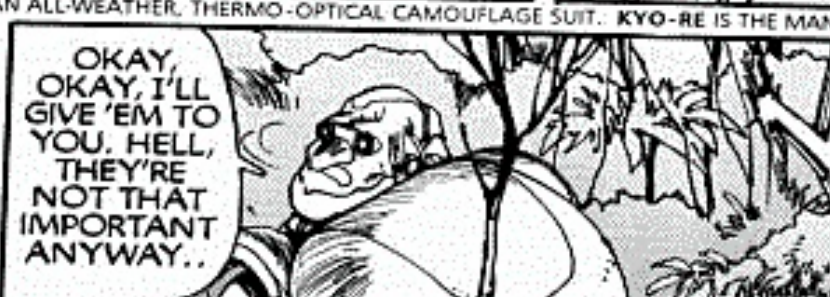
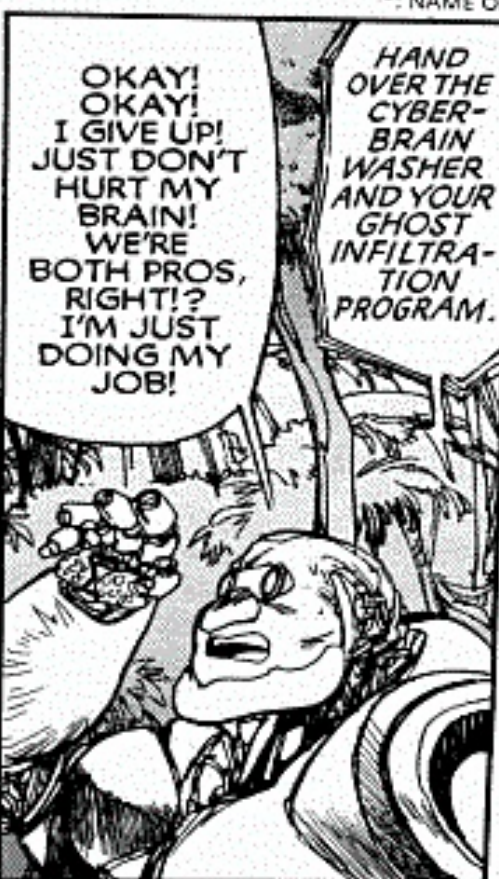




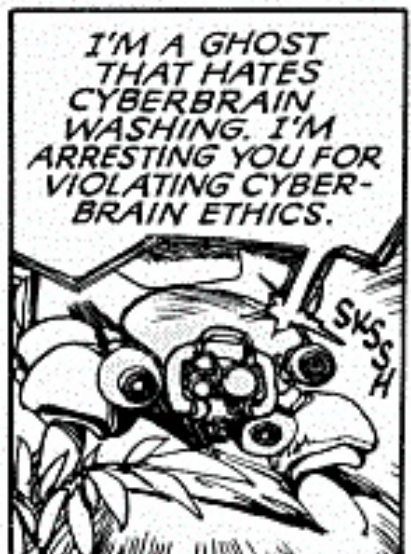
OPTO-CAM??
NO
AUDIO/IR
SIG? A
KYO-RE
INVISIBLE
CAPE...?! *



*: NAME OF AN ALL-WEATHER, THERMO-OPTICAL CAMOUFLAGE SUIT. KYO-RE IS THE MANUFACTURER'S NAME

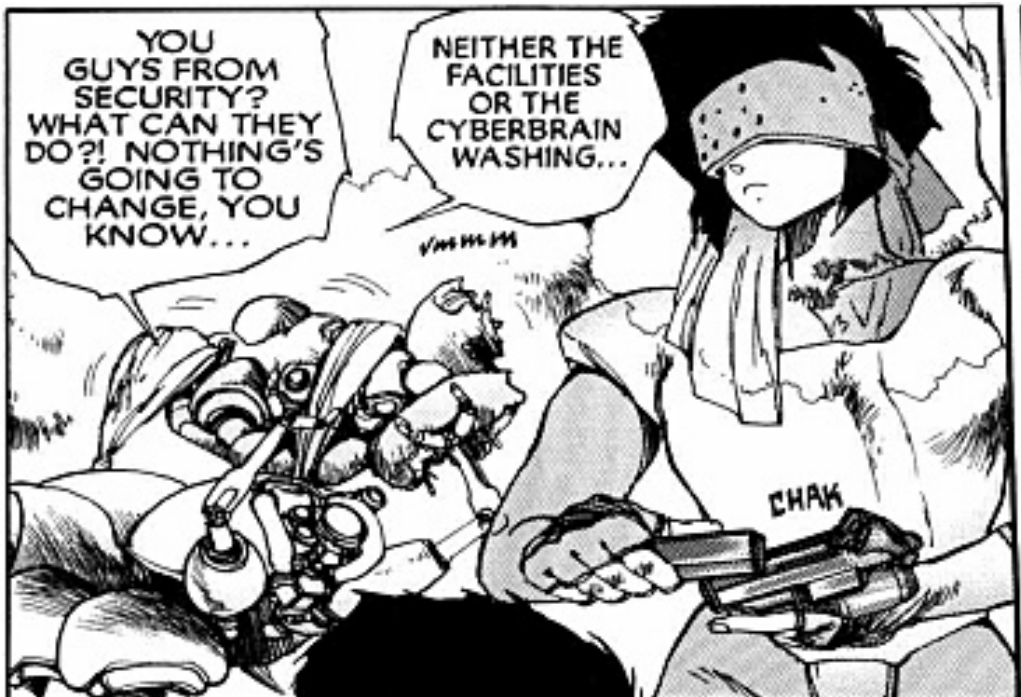


DID YOU
FRY A
HACKER
ABOUT FIVE
HOURS
AGO?



SHIT, I DON'T
KNOW... BUT
EVEN IF I DID, IT
WAS JUST IN THE
LINE OF DUTY.
WHO THE HELL
ARE YOU GUYS,
ANYWAY?

I'M A GHOST
THAT HATES
CYBERBRAIN
WASHING. I'M
ARRESTING YOU FOR
VIOLATING CYBER-
BRAIN ETHICS.



YOU GUYS FROM SECURITY? WHAT CAN THEY DO?! NOTHING'S GOING TO CHANGE, YOU KNOW...

NEITHER THE FACILITIES OR THE CYBERBRAIN WASHING...

CHAK

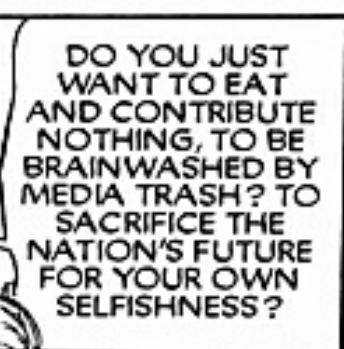


THANK GOD, MA'AM! YOU'VE COME TO FINALLY FREE US, HAVEN'T YOU?

WHAT?!



WHAT DO YOU WANT?



DO YOU JUST WANT TO EAT AND CONTRIBUTE NOTHING, TO BE BRAINWASHED BY MEDIA TRASH? TO SACRIFICE THE NATION'S FUTURE FOR YOUR OWN SELFISHNESS?



BUT... BUT... THAT'S NOT WHAT...



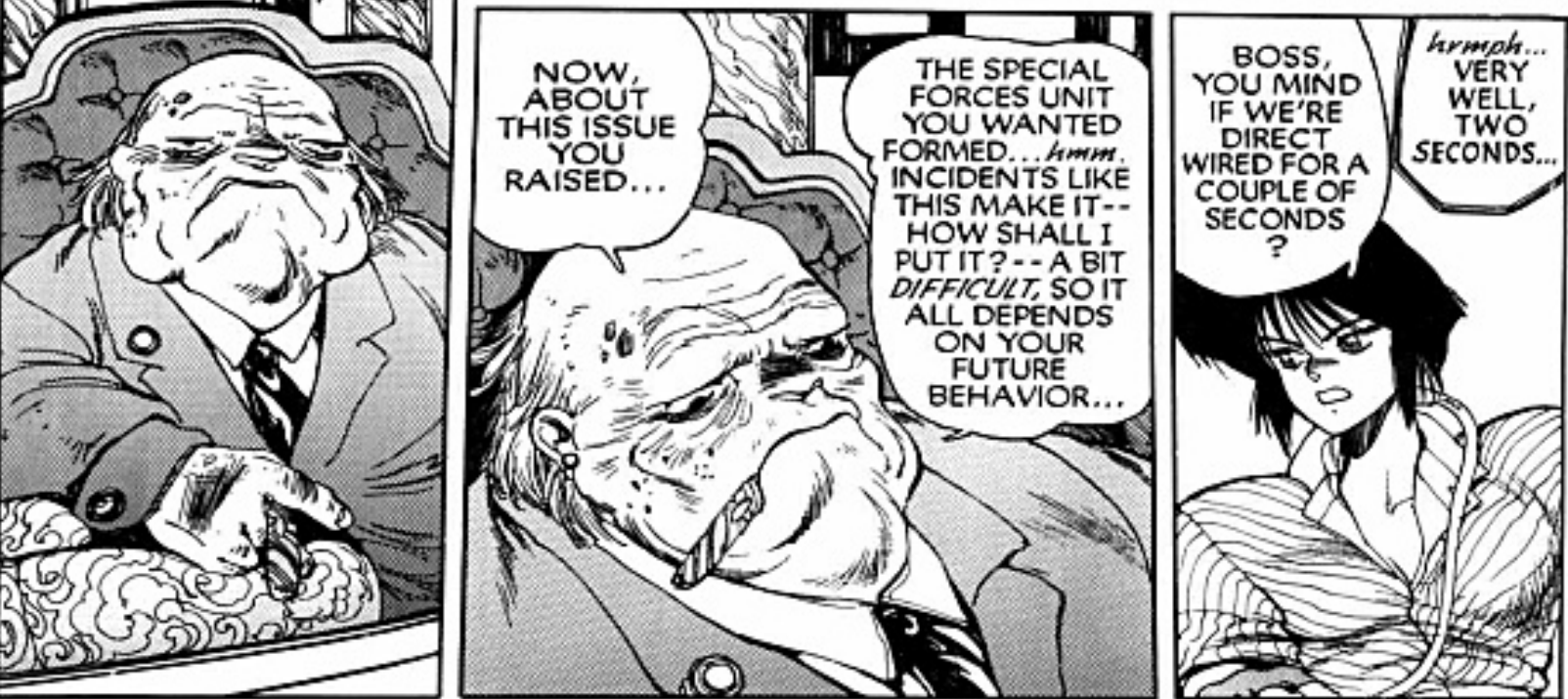
LISTEN, KID-- YOU'VE GOT A GHOST, AND A BRAIN... AND YOU CAN ACCESS A CYBER-BRAIN.



CREATE YOUR OWN FUTURE...



IT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY THAT...





GUESS THAT'S THE END OF MY MILITARY CAREER.



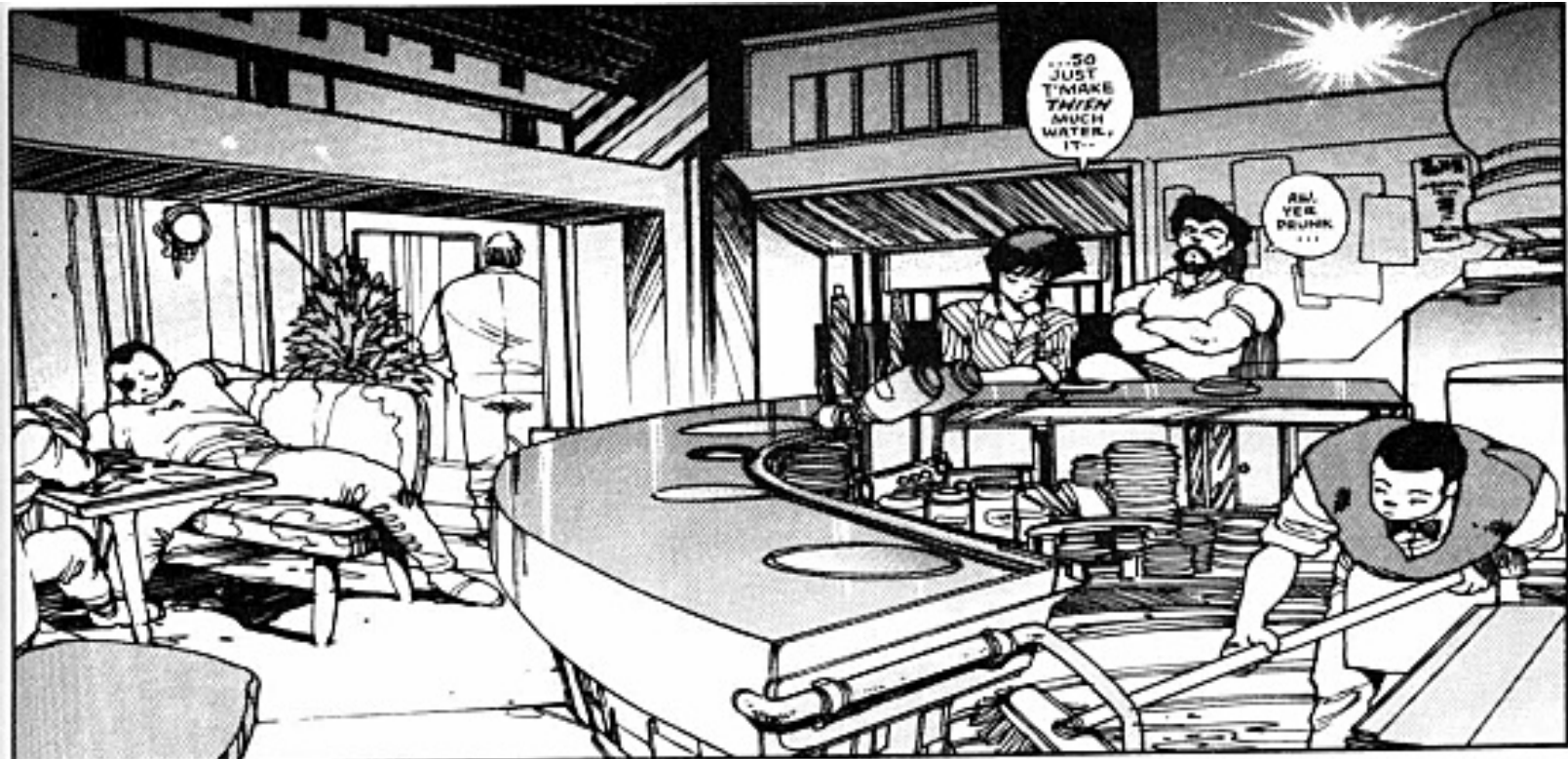
I'D RATHER BE TRANSFERRED THAN JUST BE AN ERRAND-GIRL FOR THOSE PUBLIC SECURITY PUKES.

DON'T YOU GUYS SWEAT IT... I'LL SLAP TOGETHER GREAT FITNESS REPORTS FOR YOU ALL...



HEY... WHERE'S TOGUSA? I DON'T SEE HIM.





I SAID THE BUDGET HAD PASSED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ANTI-TERRORIST UNIT, BUT THAT WAS A LIE.

INSTEAD, AN "INTERNATIONAL HOSTAGE RESCUE UNIT" WILL BE FORMED WITH THREE TIMES MORE FUNDING THAN YOU REQUESTED.

Flip

tktktk

THIS HELPS US AVOID BEING CALLED AN *SDF* THAT KILLS CIVILIANS, OR A "CRUEL SUPER-POWER." AT LEAST IN THEORY...

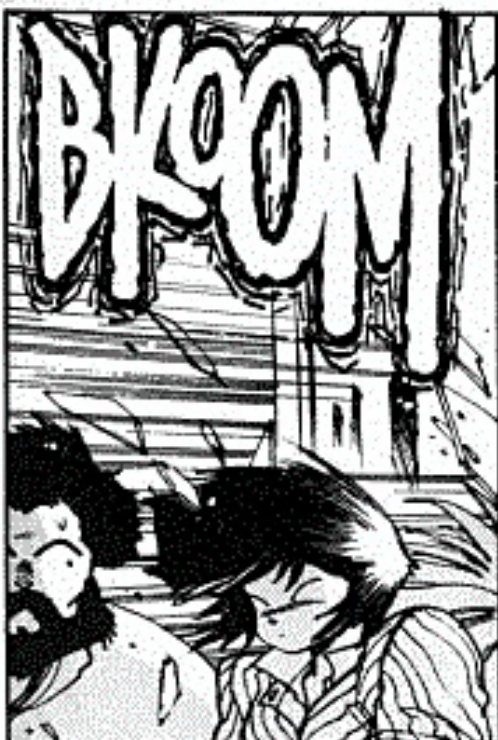
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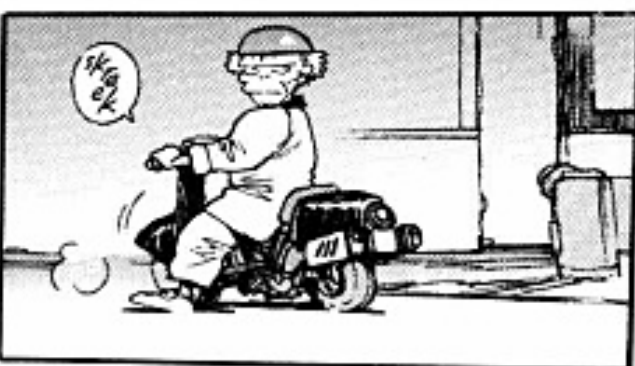
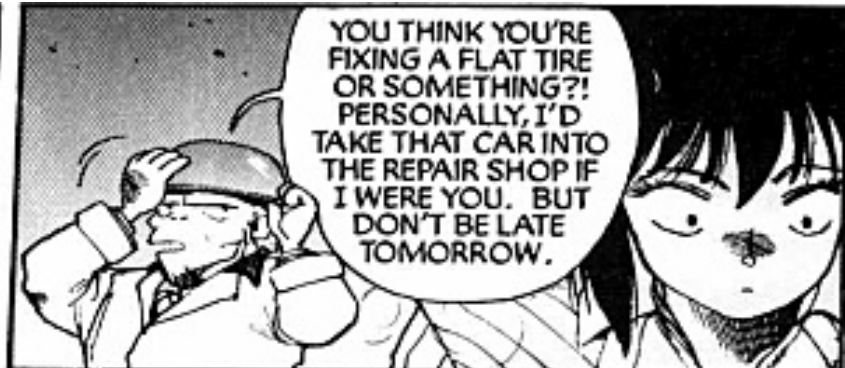
EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE BUDGET GOES TO THE FORMATION OF A SPECIAL POWER-SUIT ASSAULT FORCE....

I'LL HAVE FULL RESPONSIBILITY, REPORTING ONLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER. THE UNIT STRUCTURE'LL BE BASED ON SKILL AND MERIT, WITH NO RANKS, AND GIVEN TOP PRIORITY IN PROCUREMENT.

YOU'LL IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND ELIMINATE IT. IT'S THE SORT OF OFFENSIVE UNIT YOU AND I HAVE BOTH DREAMED OF FOR YEARS... BUT NOW IT'S UP TO YOU AND YOUR MEN.

ANOTHER ROUND OF THE SAME FOR EVERYONE...

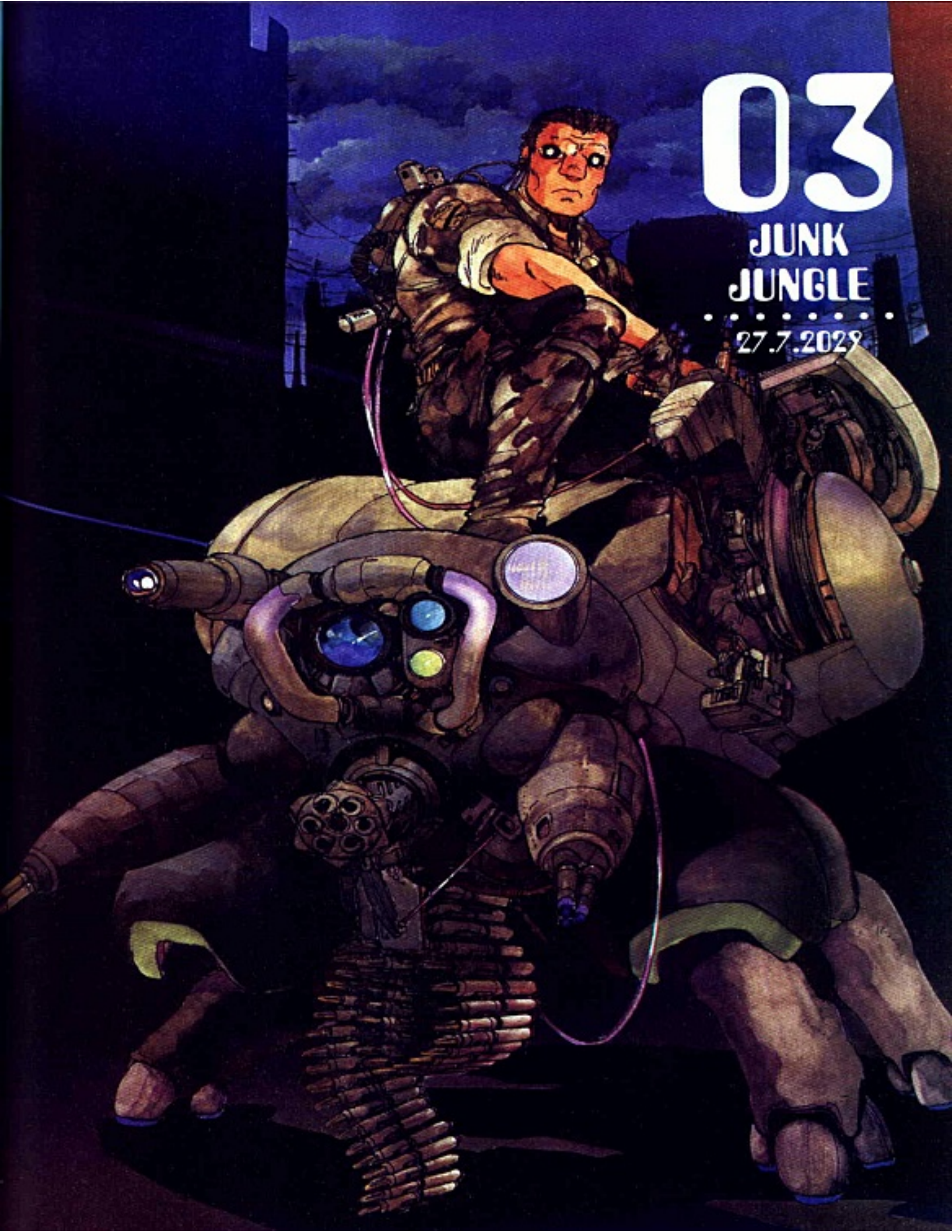




03

JUNK
JUNGLE

27.7.2029





DAMMIT...
NO AIR
CONDITIONING.
WHAT THE HELL
AM I DOING
HERE?

I
OUGHTA
QUIT...

DON'T
LEAVE
ME HERE,
GUYS!



OKAY, I
OUGHTA BE
PRETTY HARD
TO SPOT IN
DAYLIGHT
LIKE THIS...

I'M JUST
NOT CUT
OUT FOR
THIS ROUND-
THE-CLOCK
OBSERVA-
TION...



HMM...
PRESSURE-
SENSITIVE
TRIGGERS
AND A
GORGON
MINE? OR
IS IT A
DUMMY
...?

EITHER
WAY, WHAT
A WASTE! I
OUGHTA TAKE
IT HOME
AS A SOU-
VENIR...



GORGON MINE: AN ENGLISH-TYPE ANTI-PERSONNEL CANISTER MINE THAT JUMPS UP ABOUT TWO METERS WHEN TRIGGERED AND THEN SCATTERS AROUND A HUNDRED MINI-MINES (TRIGGERED TWO SECONDS AFTER LANDING BY ANY VIBRATION OCCURRING WITHIN A THREE METER RADIUS).



SNAP



PSST,
IT'S
ME...

CHAK



WELL,
SEE ANY-
THING?

AFTER THIRTY-
TWO HOURS ON
STAKEOUT, I'VE HAD
TWO PHONE CALLS,
AND THAT'S ALL...
NO REPLACEMENT,
NO PIZZA, NO
NOTHING...



WELL,
HERE,
HAVE A
SWIG...

DON'T
MIND IF I
DO...



JUST AS ONE
OF OUR KOREAN
SOURCES
WARNED... THE
"PUPPETEER" HAS
STARTED TO
MEDDLE WITH
EACH TERMINAL
IN THE NET-
WORK.

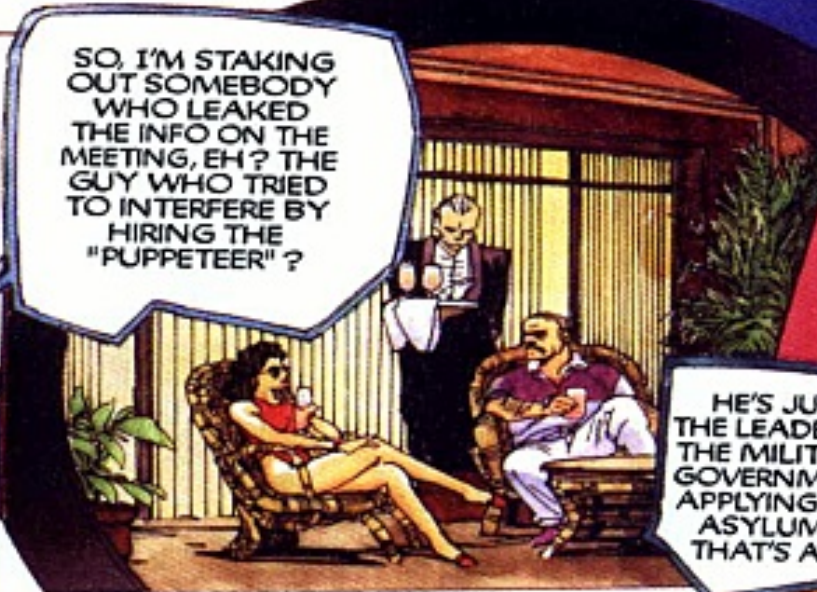
YOU MEAN THE
MYSTERY "SUPER
HACKER"...? THAT'S
GOT SOMETHING
TO DO WITH THIS
STAKE-OUT?

HEY! DID
YOU WATER
THIS STUFF
BEHIND?



FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, THEY'RE PLANNING ON INTERFERING WITH THE SECRET MEETING WITH THE *GAVEL* REPUBLIC...

WELL, IN THAT CASE, IT'S HARDLY A *SECRET* MEETING, IS IT...



SO, I'M STAKING OUT SOMEBODY WHO LEAKED THE INFO ON THE MEETING, EH? THE GUY WHO TRIED TO INTERFERE BY HIRING THE "PUPPETEER"?

HE'S JUST THE LEADER OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, APPLYING FOR ASYLUM... THAT'S ALL.



YOU CAME OUT HERE JUST TO TELL ME THAT?



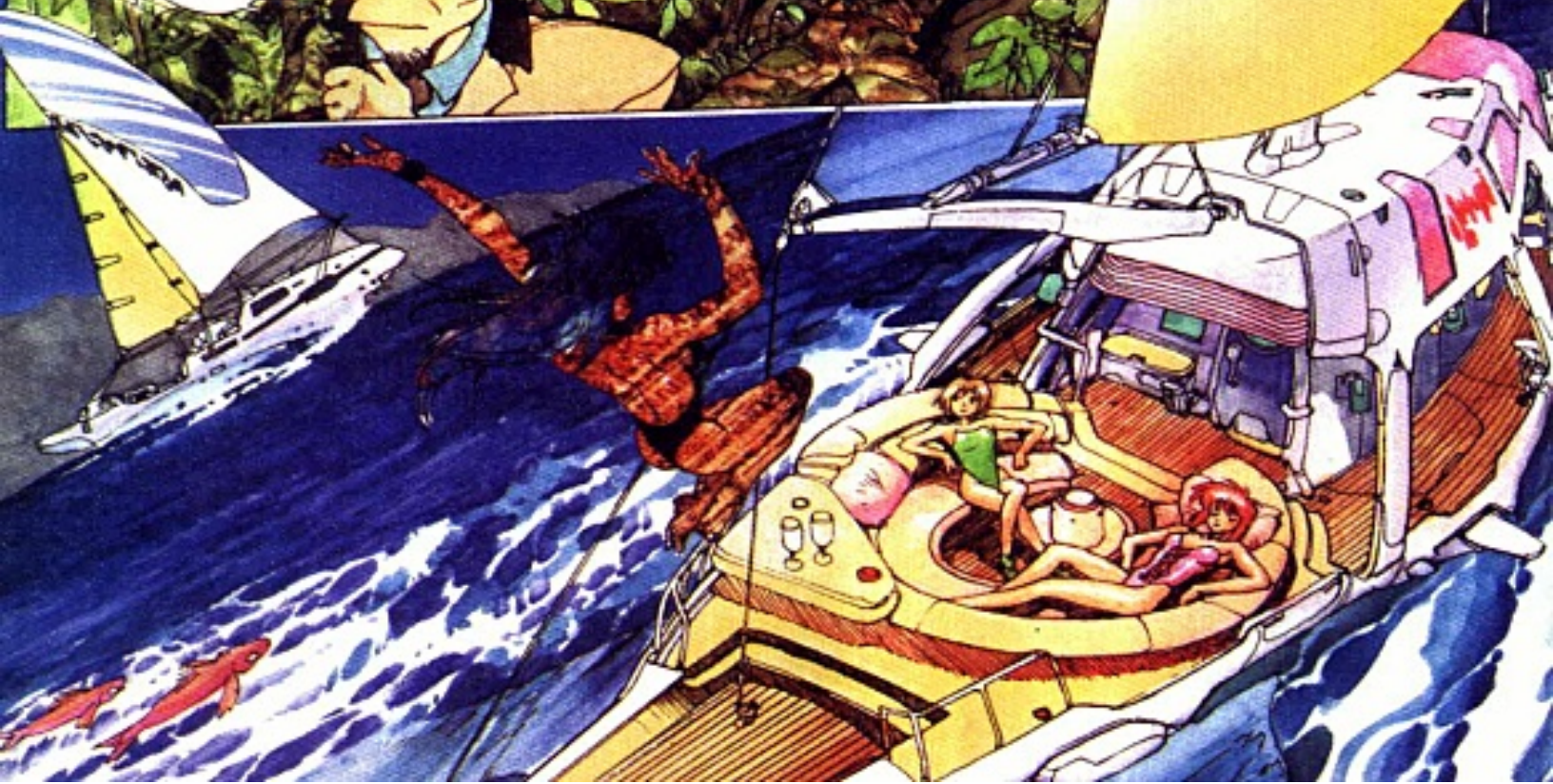
OF COURSE NOT! I WANT YOU TO CALL MAJOR KUSANAGI ON YOUR ENCRYPTED CHANNEL. TELL HER TO REPORT TO FLAT #17!

BUT SHE'S ON *R&R*, CHIEF...

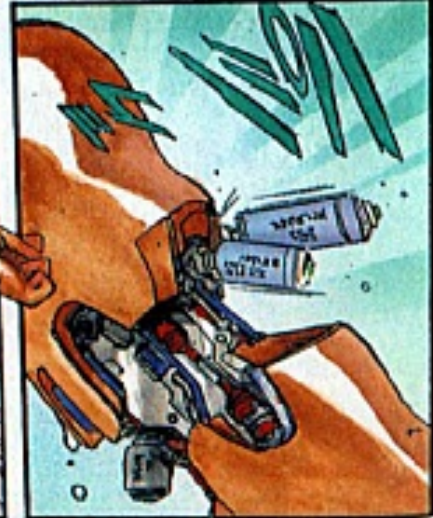
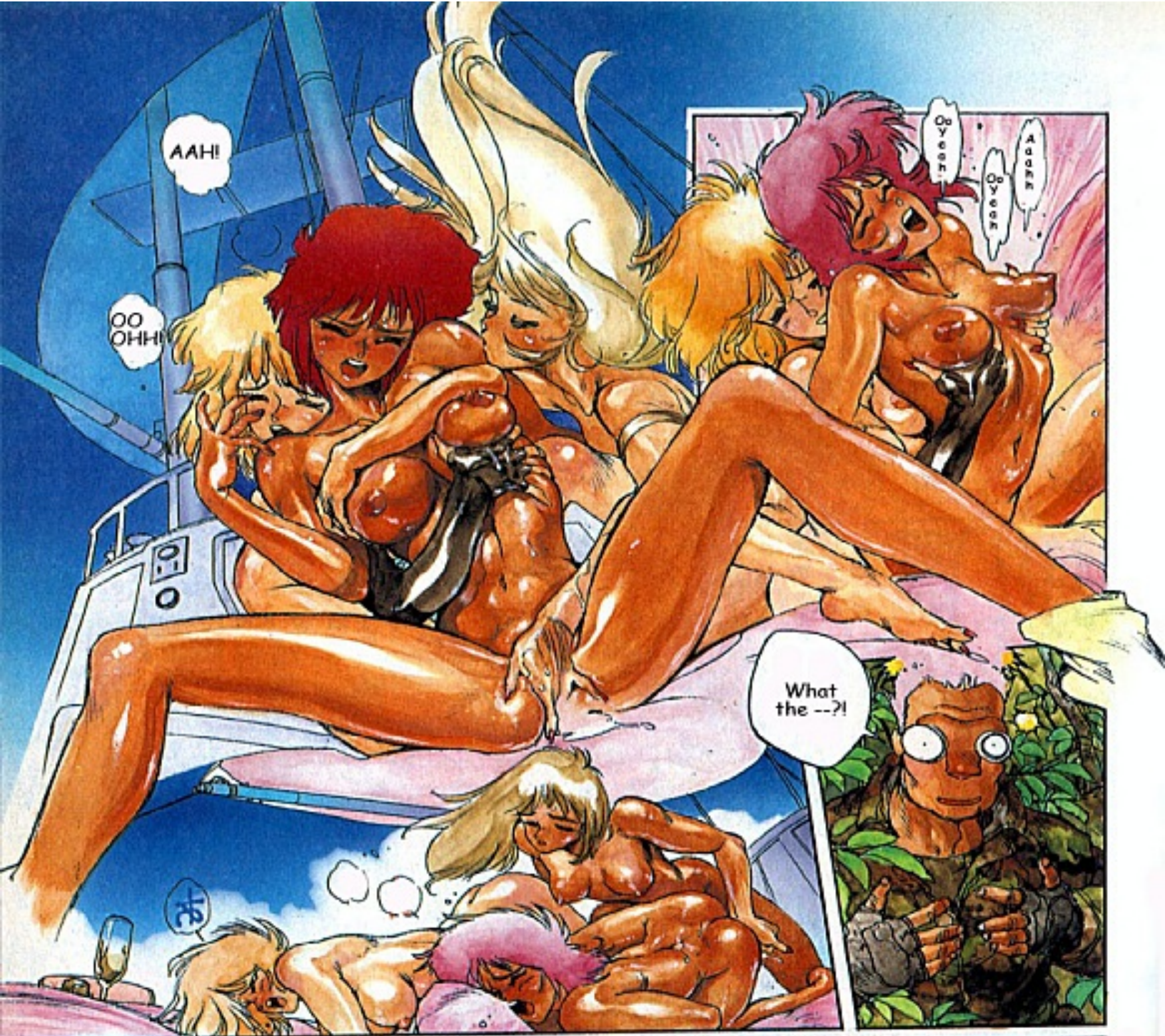


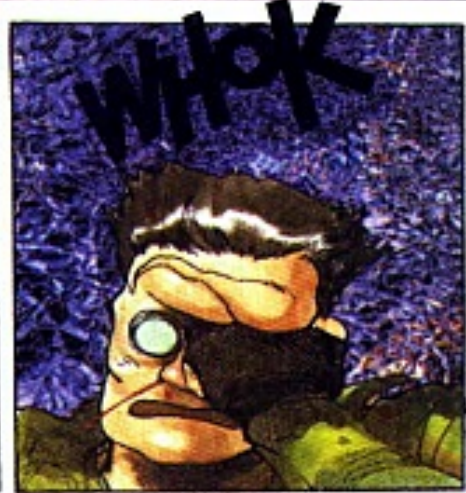
WELL, IT'S CAN-CELED...

UH-OH...









WHUP
WHUP WHUP
WHUP



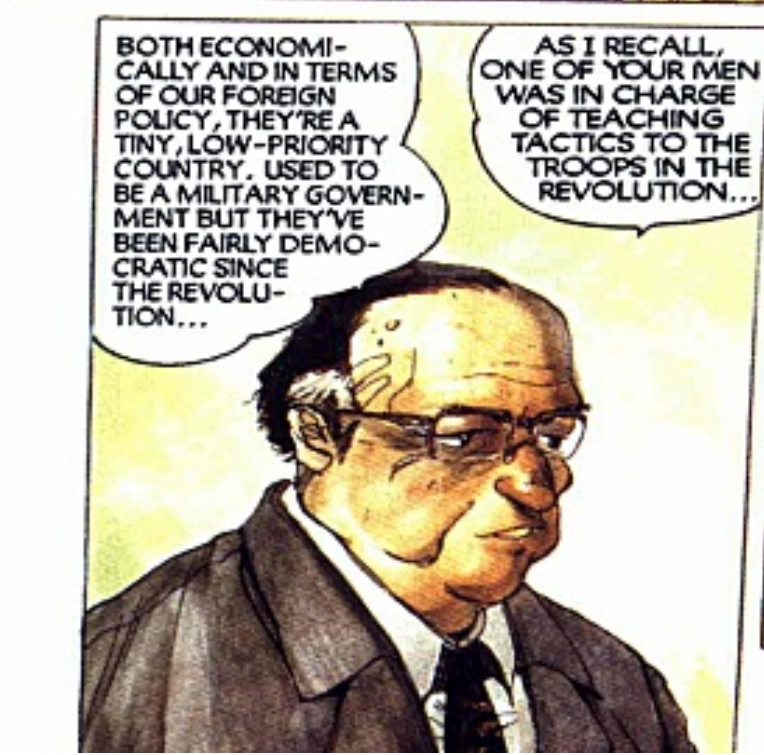
WELL, MR. ARAMAKI—YOU NEED SOMETHING FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY?

GOOD MORNING, SIR!

IT'S ABOUT THE GAVEL REPUBLIC, SIR..

IT COULD HARDLY BE THAT IMPORTANT. WE'VE GIVEN GAVEL AN "E" RANKING-- 6 FOR NEED, 1 FOR PROBLEMS...

...AND THEY HAVEN'T COME YET.



BOTH ECONOMICALLY AND IN TERMS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY, THEY'RE A TINY, LOW-PRIORITY COUNTRY. USED TO BE A MILITARY GOVERNMENT BUT THEY'VE BEEN FAIRLY DEMOCRATIC SINCE THE REVOLUTION...

AS I RECALL, ONE OF YOUR MEN WAS IN CHARGE OF TEACHING TACTICS TO THE TROOPS IN THE REVOLUTION...

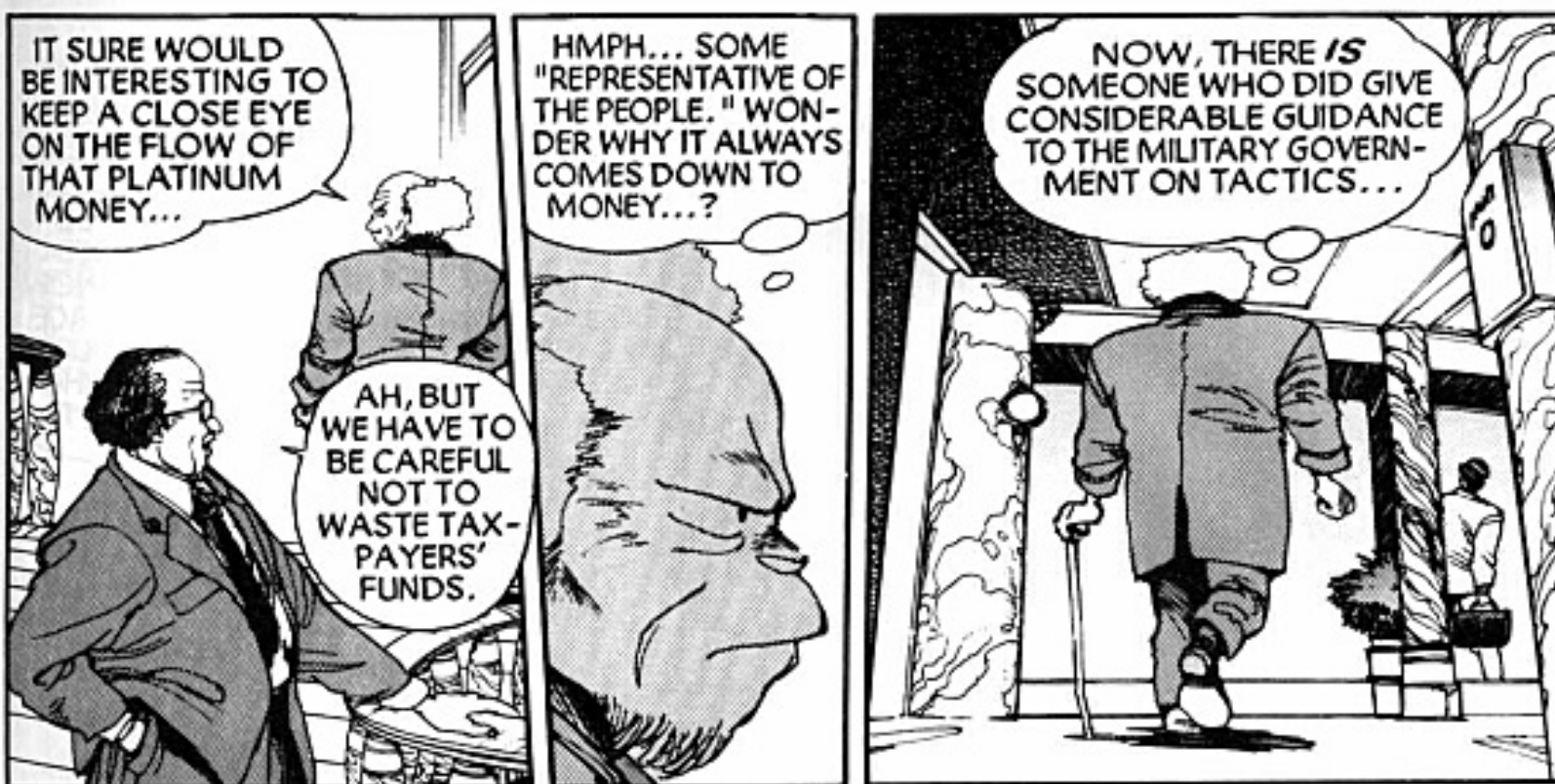
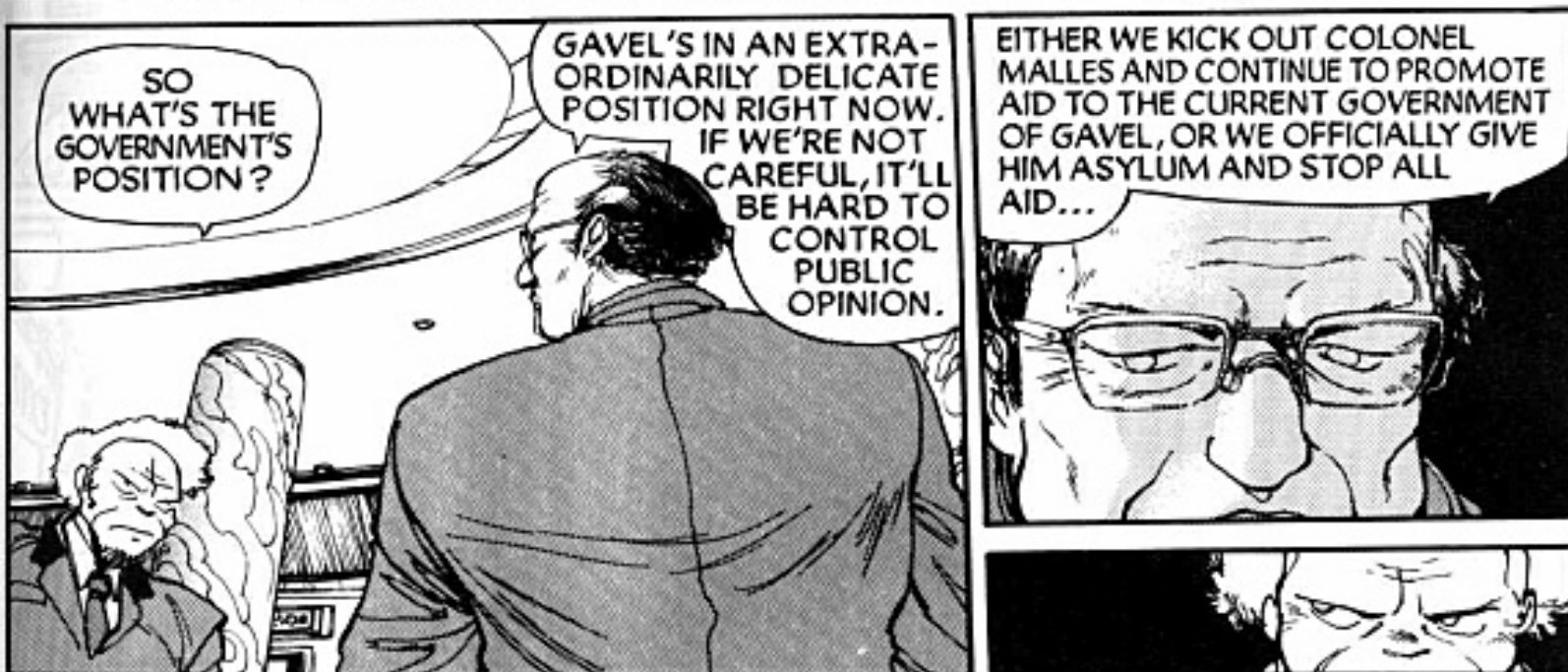
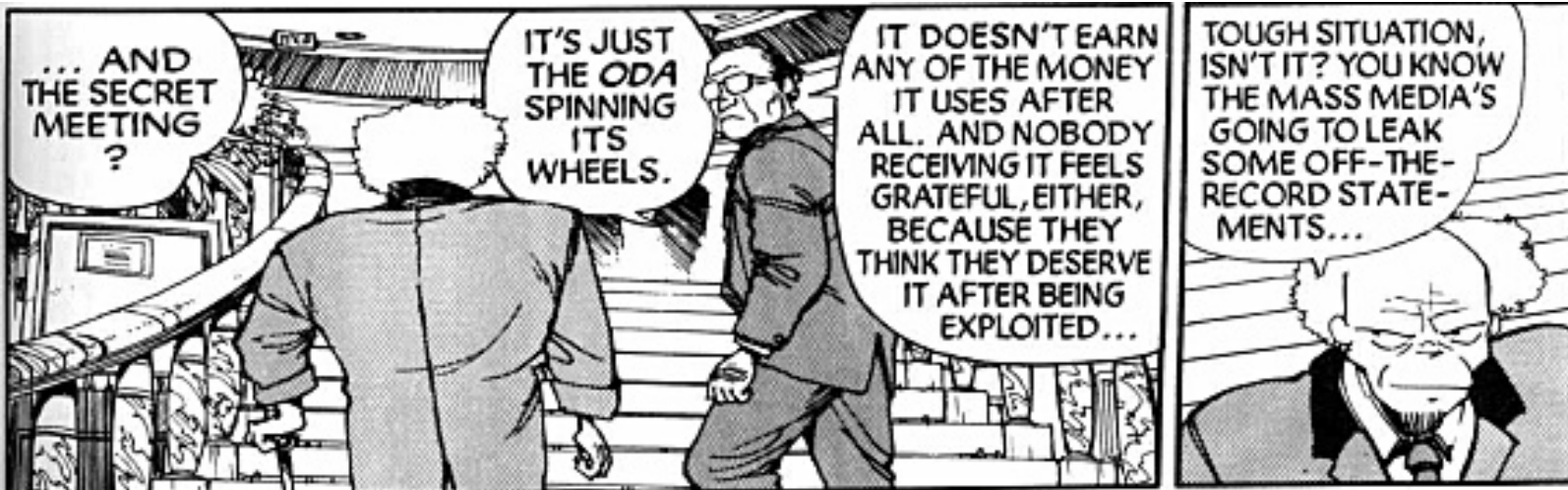
THAT A FACT?

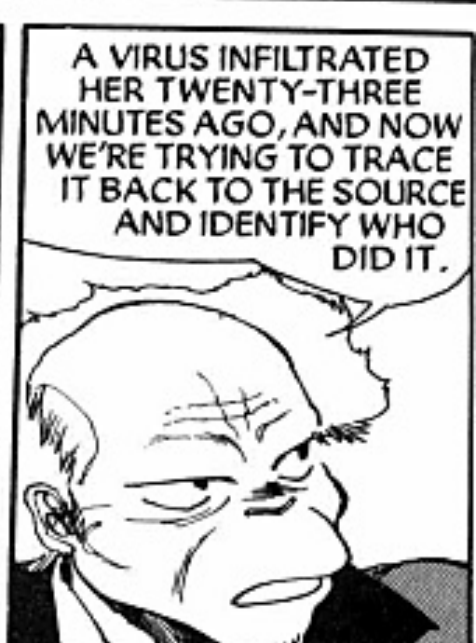


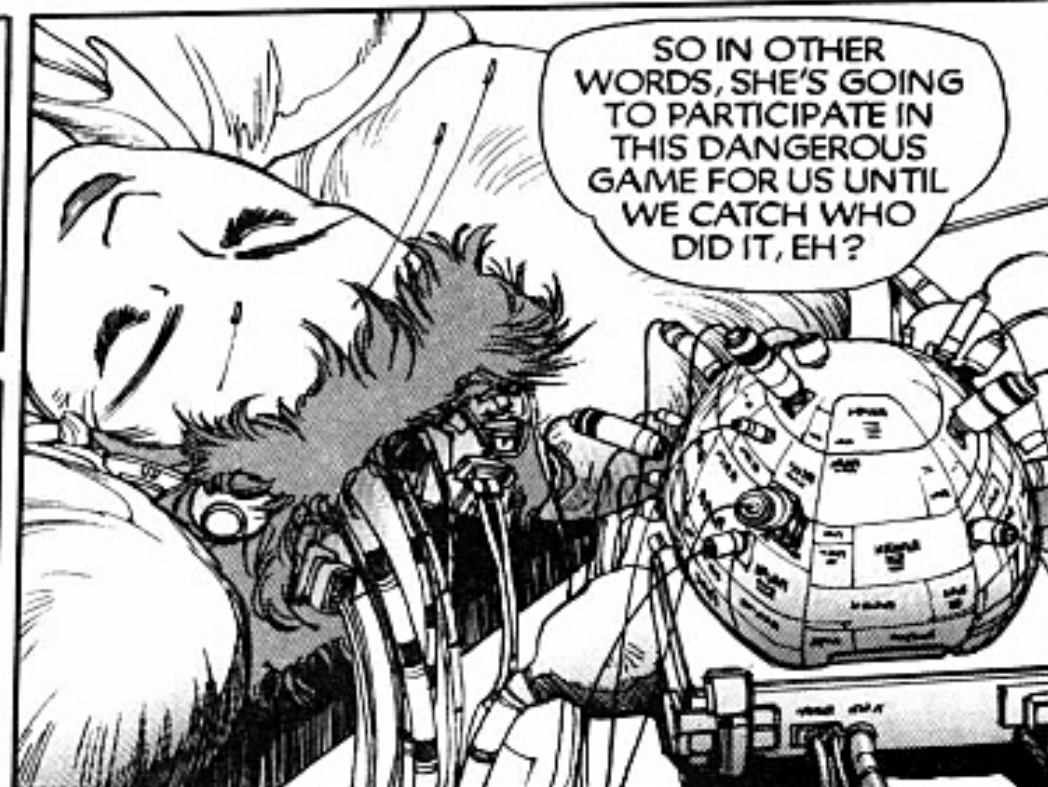
COLONEL MALLES, THE BOSS OF THE FORMER MILITARY GOVERNMENT, IS IN OUR COUNTRY NOW, SUPPOSEDLY SEEKING "MEDICAL TREATMENT..."

... BUT HE'S STILL SENDING AID TO THE MILITARY FORCES IN HIS COUNTRY. AS A RESULT, THE FORCES UNDER HIS INFLUENCE STILL CONTROL THE PLATINUM DEPOSITS THERE.









YA GOTTA TELL ME, MAJOR... I HEARD THIS FROM MAYUMI, IN SECURITY'S ARMORY, BUT I DON'T BEL--

YOU MEAN THAT SHE'S REALLY SIXTY-TWO YEARS OLD?

WHAT? NO SHIT!

SO IS IT REALLY TRUE SHE CAN HIT A PINHEAD WITH A 3.5" BARREL SEBURO™ SNAB AT 25 YARDS, FIRING TWELVE ROUNDS IN THREE SECONDS?

HEY, TOGUSA, *EVERYONE* CAN DO THAT... EXCEPT YOU AND SAITO.

AW, C'MON... DON'T PICK ON ME, MAJOR.

WITH HUMAN SILHOUTTES SHE USUALLY HITS THE MARK AT 100 YARDS.

SNABS ARE REALLY DESIGNED TO BE USED AGAINST THE ENEMY AT UNDER FIVE YARDS, BUT THERE'S NOTHING *THAT* SPECIAL ABOUT WHAT SHE CAN DO...

BUT I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN ANYONE DO THAT AT THE SHOOTING RANGE! 'COURSE, I'M NOT SPECIAL "A" RANK MYSELF...

WHAT WE *REALLY* NEED, TOGUSA, IS NOT SHARPSHOOTING SKILLS, SO MUCH AS THE ABILITY TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO MAKE *SURE* THE ENEMY CAN BE KILLED.

IF YOU WANT TO PLAY AT LONG-RANGE SNIPING, YOU CAN ALWAYS GO SHOOT AN ELEPHANT AT 500 MILES WITH A MINIA-TURE CRUISE MISSILE...

BY THE WAY, WHY ARE YOU USING A REVOLVER FOR YOUR MAIN GUN?

IN A TWO-MAN CELL, AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF IT JAMMING, EVEN IF YOU'RE CARRYING TWO GUNS?

I HAPPEN TO LIKE THE M2007!

SEBURO™ C-25: THINK OF IT AS AN FN P90 WITH A LOWER MAGAZINE!

WELL, AS THE ONE BEING BACKED-UP, I'M MORE INTERESTED IN BEING PROTECTED THAN IN WHAT GUN YOU LIKE BEST...

I'M THE ONE IN THE LINE OF FIRE, AFTER ALL. DO ME A FAVOR, TOGUSA, AND CARRY A 20-SHOT, 5MM SEBURO™...

YEAH, YEAH... SHIT.

AND WHAT THE HELL'S THIS? THIS AS-11 SHOTGUN'S GOT A SHORT RANGE AND CAN'T EVEN PENETRATE A CAR DOOR! WHAT GOOD IS IT? DON'T EXPECT IT TO HAVE ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON A PRO, AND FOR ANYTHING OVER 30 YARDS YOU NEED AN ASSAULT RIFLE ANYWAY...

HEY, IT'LL GO THROUGH A MERCEDES DOOR--I'VE GOT IT FILLED WITH SLUGS.

AND IN-DOORS I CAN USE IT TO BLAST A HOLE IN WALLS...

SURE YOU'RE NOT CONFUSING HUNTING HUMANS WITH MAKING MINCE-MEAT?

FOR CLOSE-RANGE WORK AND PIERCING POWER USE THE SEBURO™, FOR WALLS AND DISTANCE USE A RIFLE!

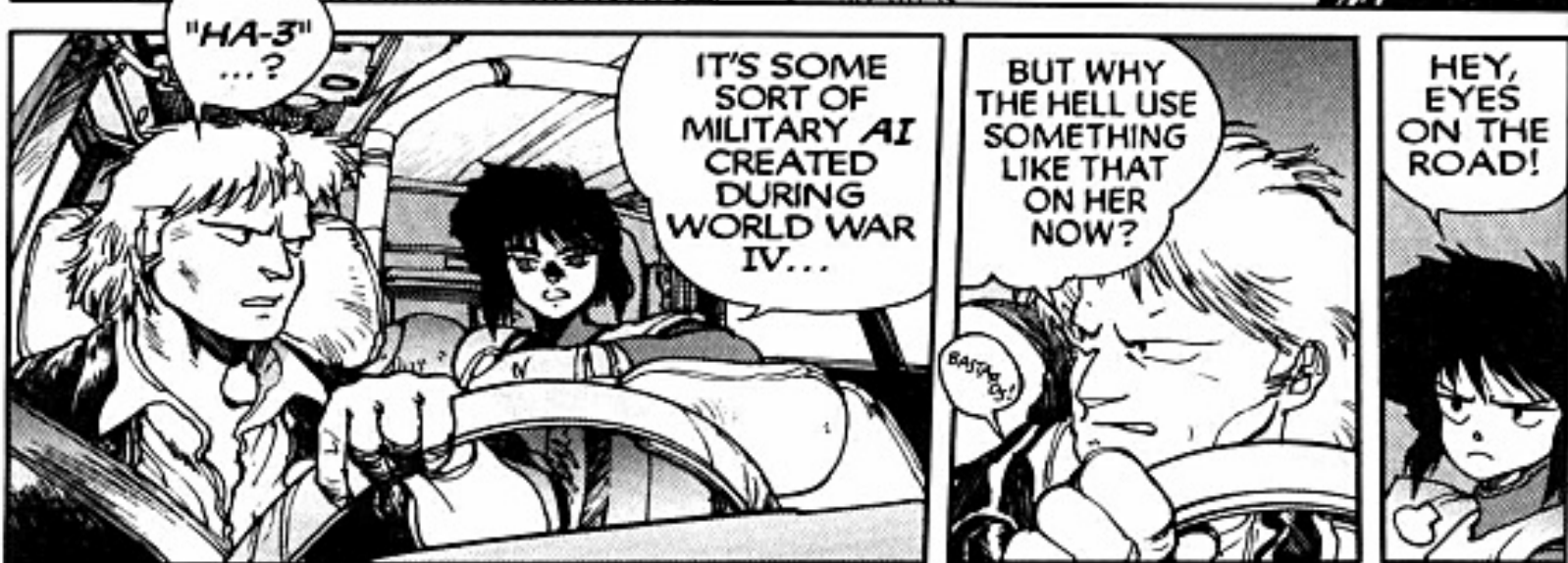
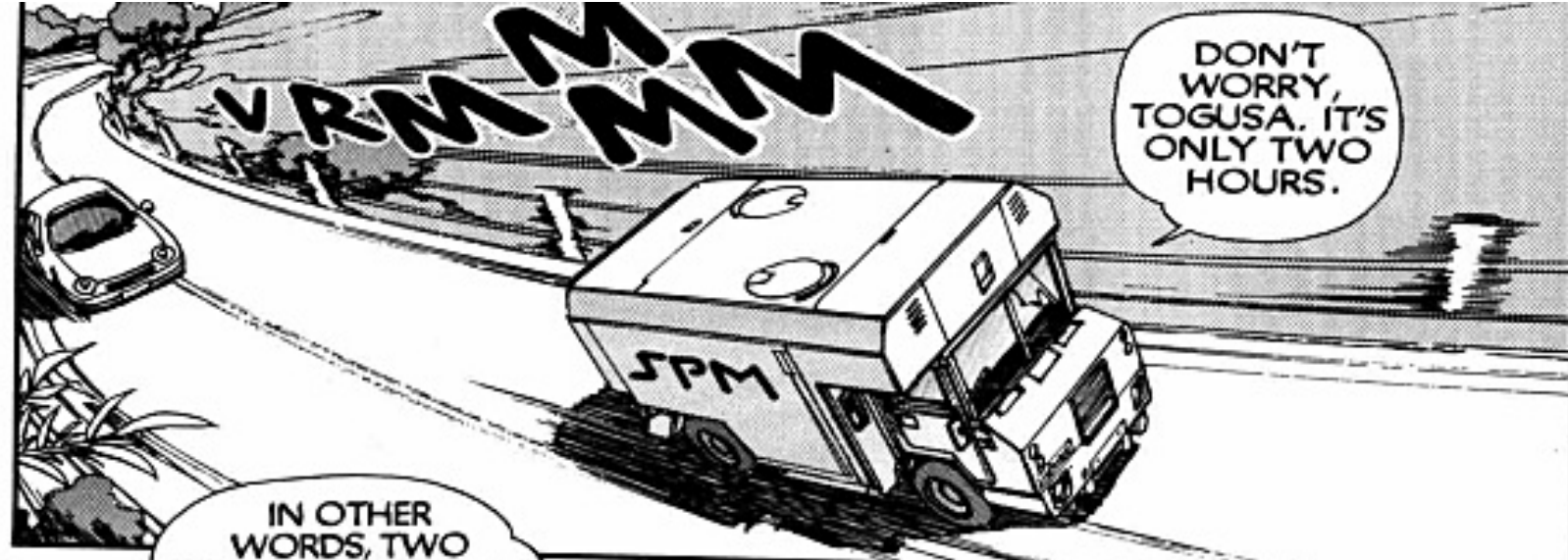
STILL, I REALLY THINK I COULD USE IT...

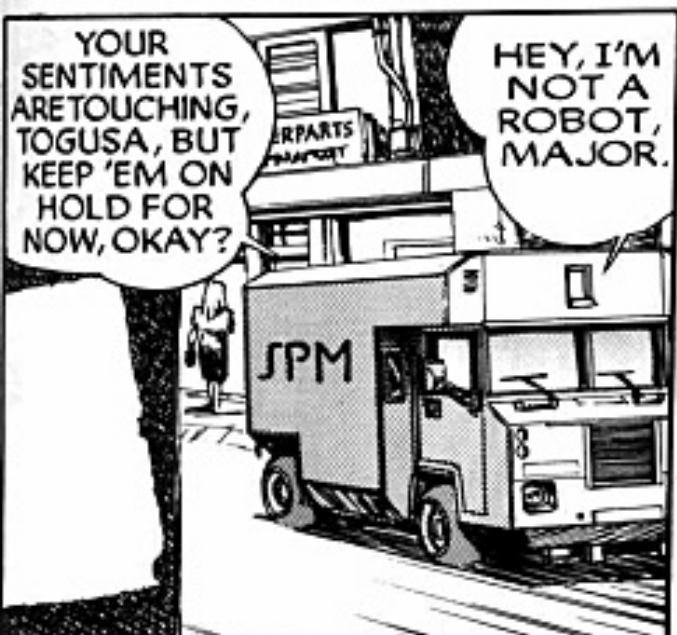
WELL, THIS TIME YOU WON'T NEED IT.

WE'RE TRACING THE HACKER THAT INFILTRATED THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S INTERPRETER.

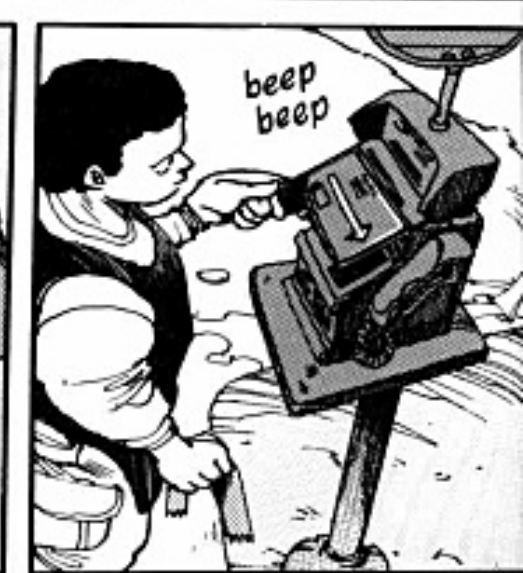
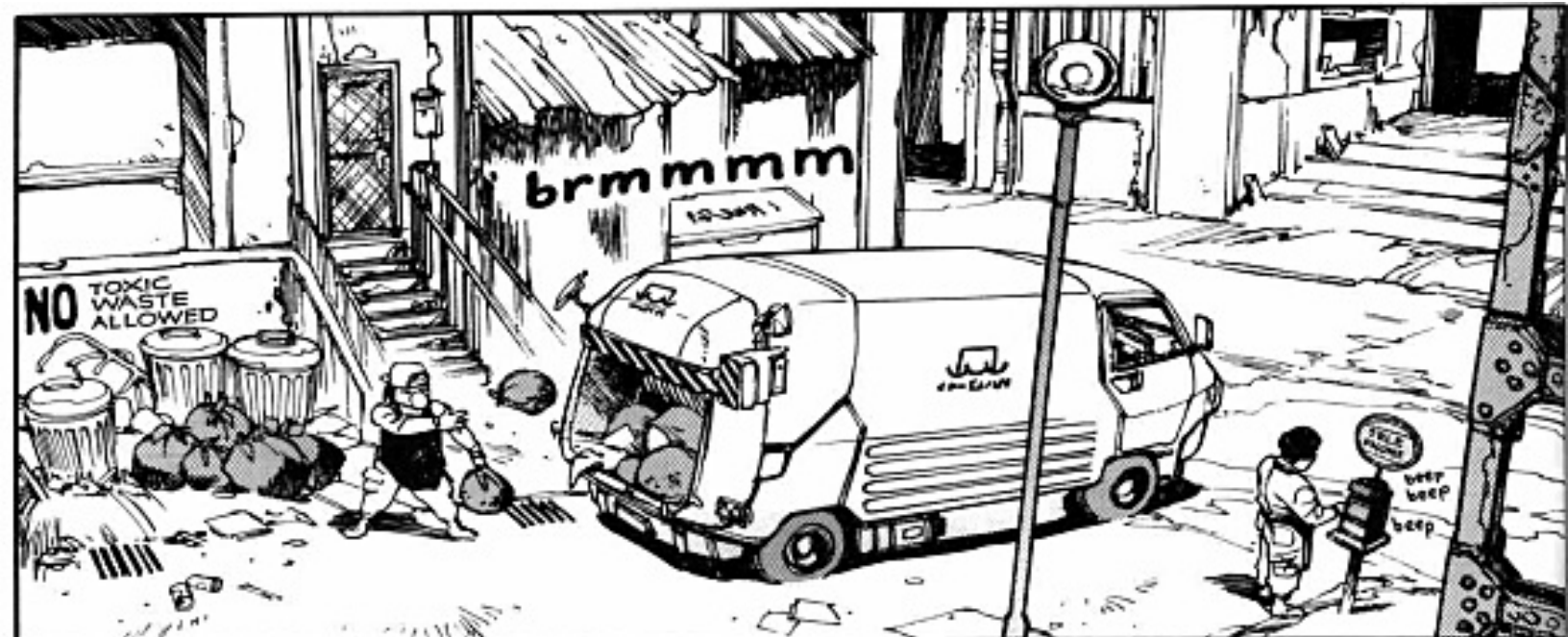
HIS INTERPRETER ?!

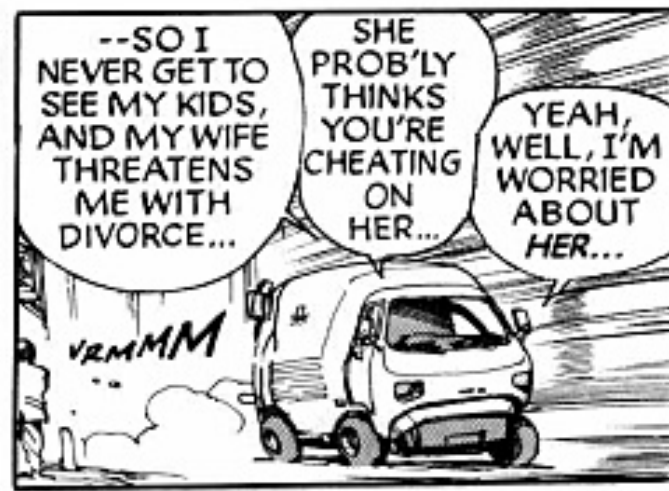
YOU MEAN-- !!!?





After this, there's a scene where Mokoto takes over the driving and Togusa checks his gear and puts it on, but it was too much of a hassle to draw so I left it out...





HELLO? POLICE?
WE'VE GOT ANOTHER
SENIOR CITIZEN ABAN-
DONED ON A TRASH
PILE. WE'RE PICKING
UP THE GARBAGE
AROUND HIM...

SURE ARE A
LOT OF JUNGLE
CROWS
AROUND...

ATTENTION,
OH HONORABLE
"JOB-CHALLENGED"
ONES-- STAND
BACK, WE'RE
GONNA USE
A LITTLE ANTI-
CROW GAS...

SHAKK SHAKKA



OUCH! DAMN
IDIOTS EVEN
PUT BROKEN
GLASS IN
PLASTIC
BAGS!

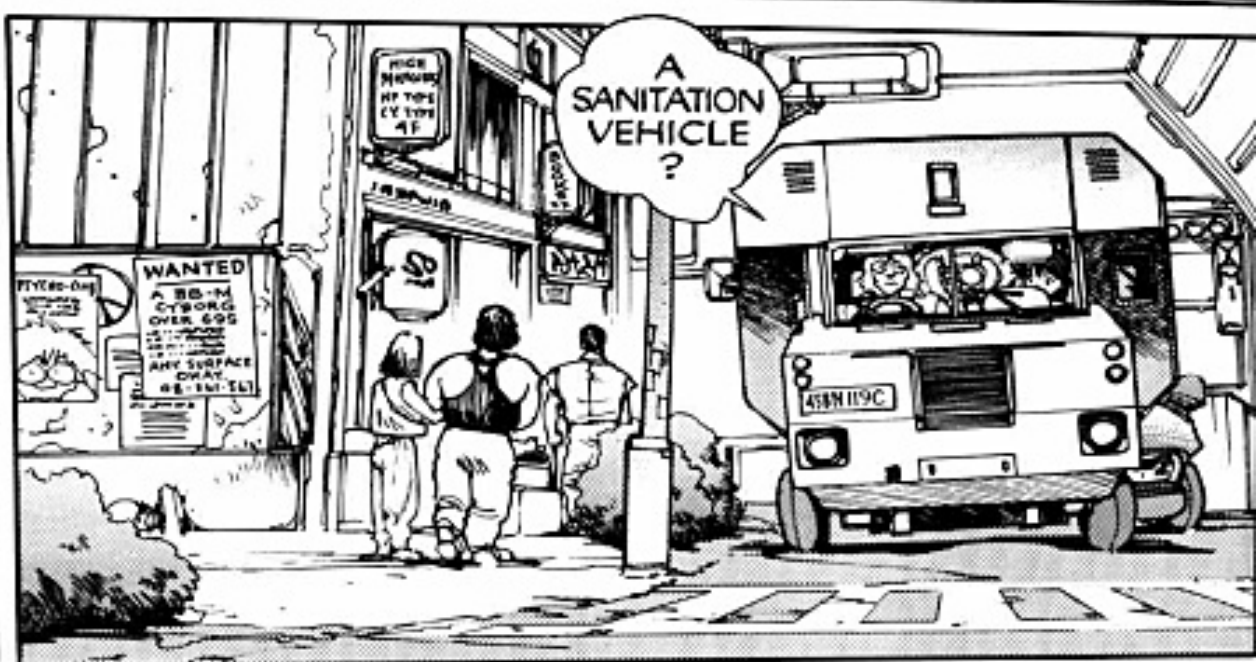
THAT'S WEIRD...
THIS HYPO'S GOT
"FOR USE BY
PATHOLOGY
DEPARTMENT
ONLY" WRITTEN
ON IT...

IF ONLY WE
COULD GET OUR
BOSSSES TO BUY
US ARMORED
SUITS... WE
OUGHTA GO ON
STRIKE LIKE WORK-
ERS IN FOREIGN
COUNTRIES DO...

I WAS
BETTER OFF
WHEN I WAS
WORKING AT
THE SACRED
CITIZEN'S
RELIEF
CENTER...

OH, YE POOR
PROLETARIAT--
STOP STAND-
ING THERE LIKE
A BUSTED
ROBOT AND
GET YOUR ASS
IN GEAR!



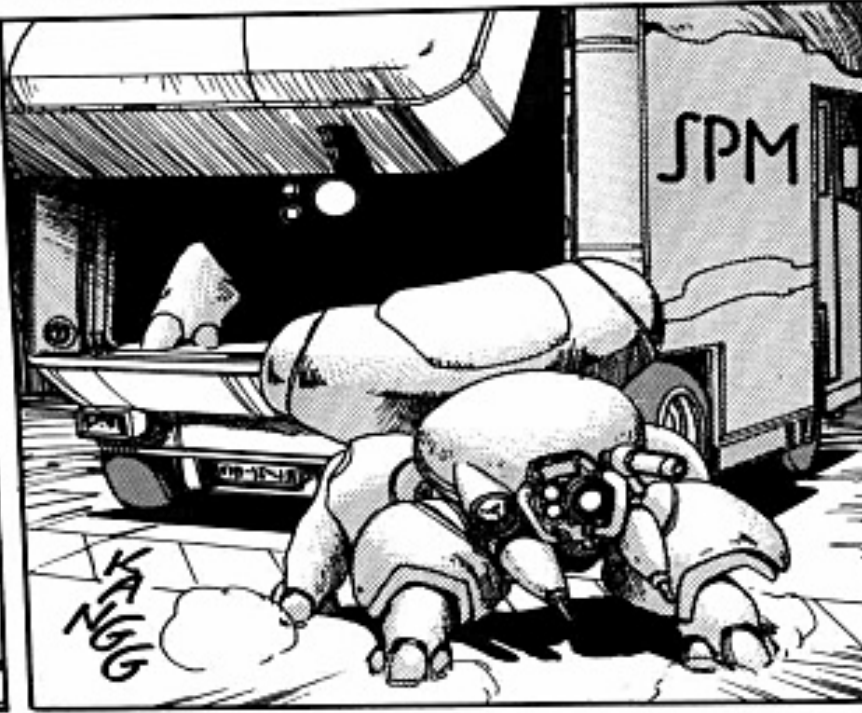
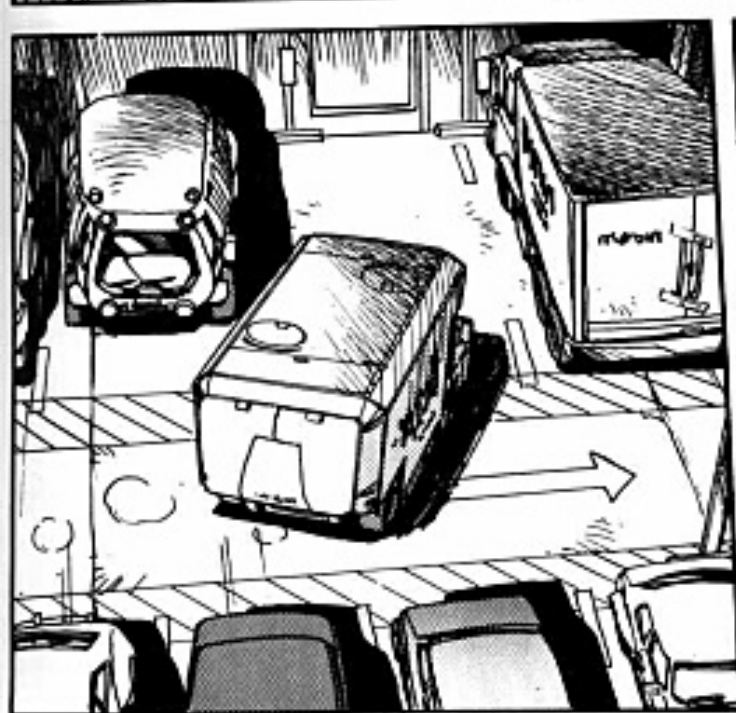
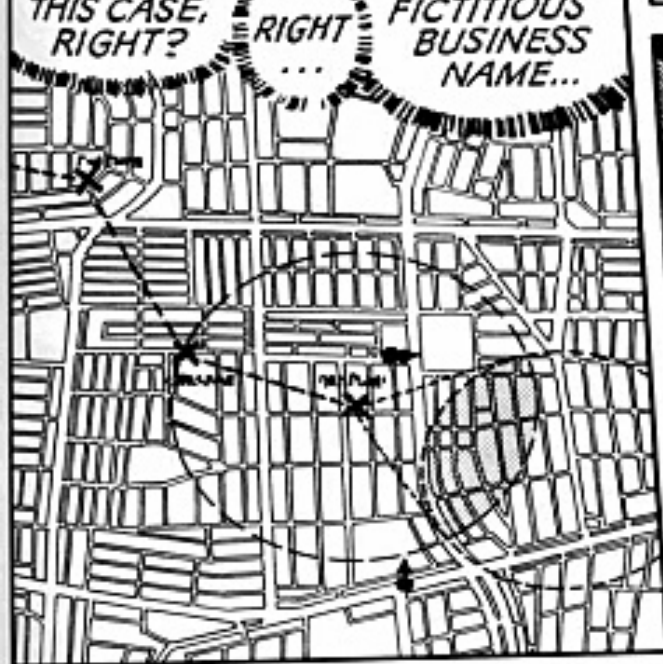


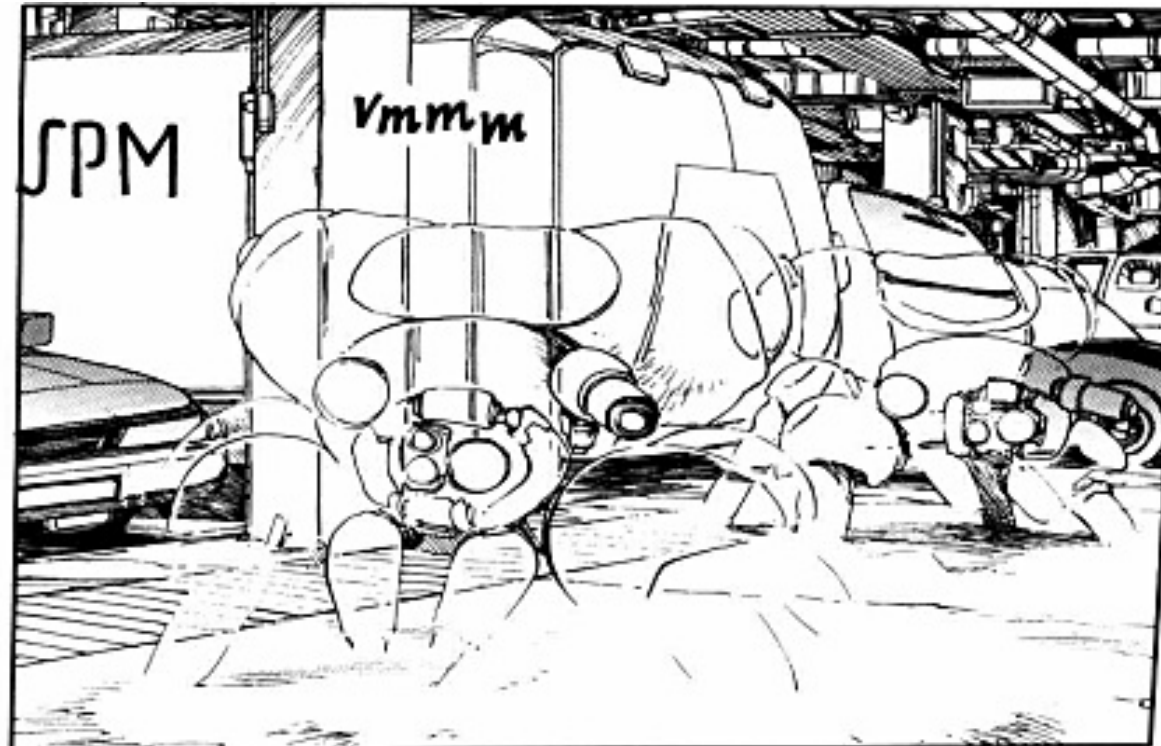


THAT INTELLIGENCE GUY, NAKAJIMA, WHO WAS IN #17 WANTED TO HANDLE THIS CASE, RIGHT?

RIGHT ...

HE CALLED COLONEL MALLES' PLACE. HE'S APPARENTLY DEALING IN PLATINUM UNDER A FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME...





AREN'T YOU OVER-DOING THIS A BIT?

YOU WANNA PULL A HALF-ASSED OP?



HEY, THIS MAY BE SOME GARBAGE MAN'S IDEA OF A PRANK...



GIVE ME A BREAK, TOGUSA!

JEEZ, STOP PICKIN' ON ME, MAJOR!

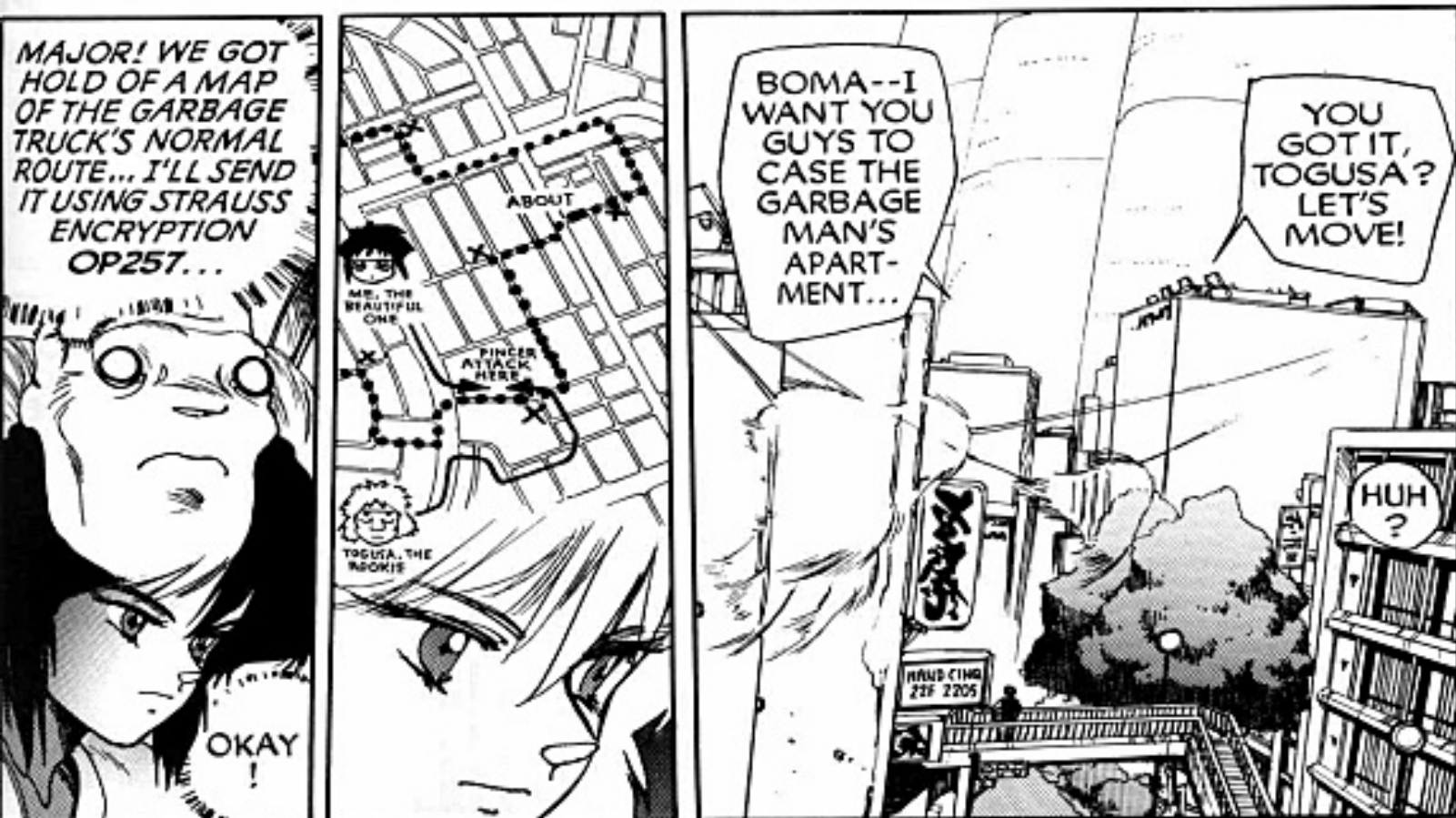
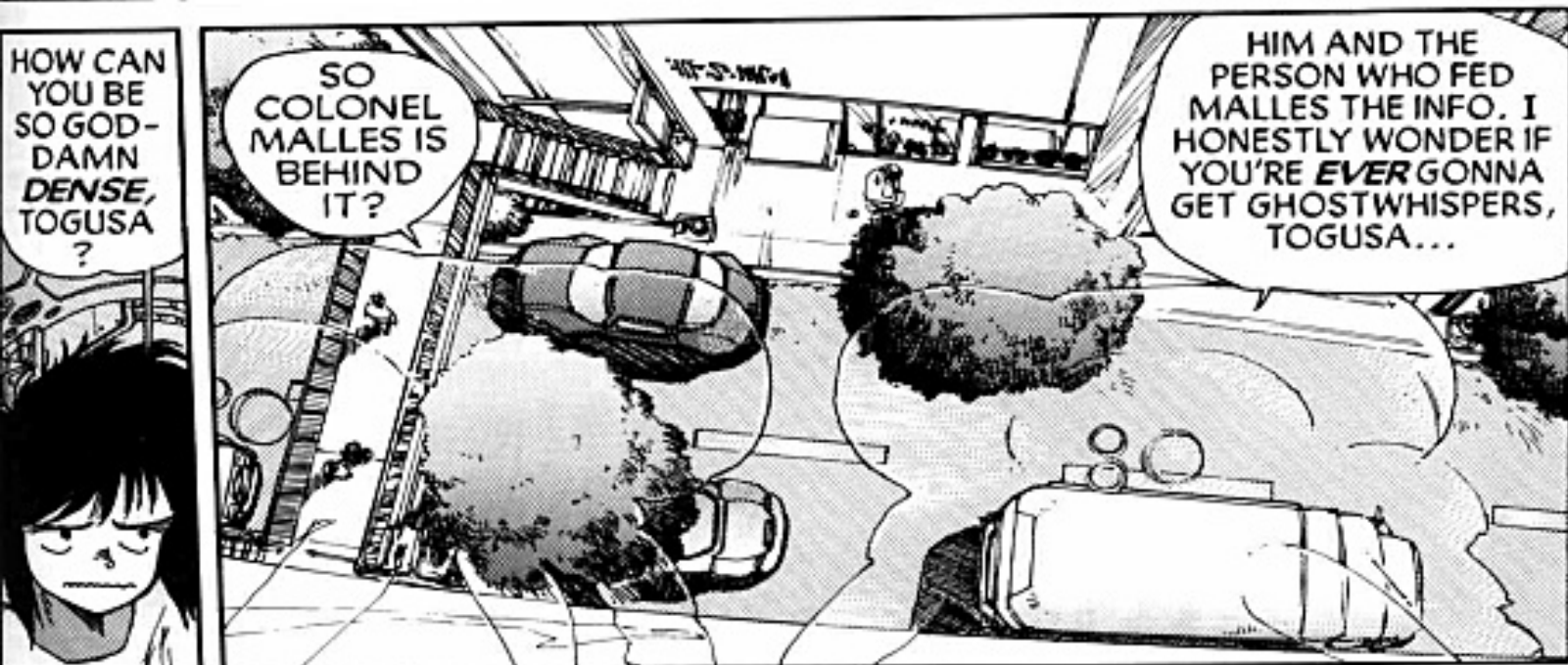
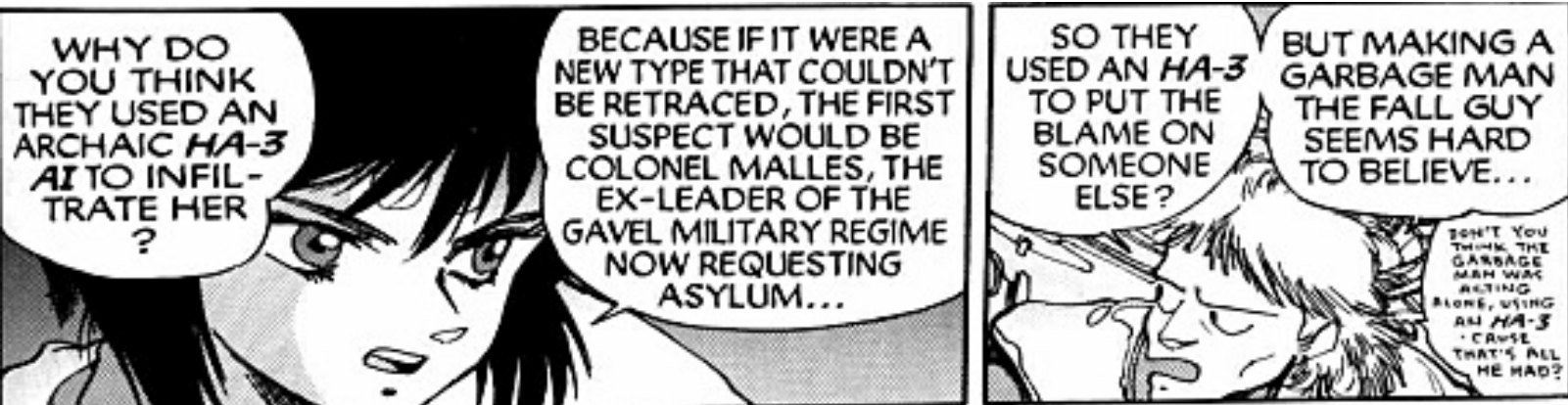


WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO DO MIGHT NOT HAVE WORKED, BUT IF THE **HA-3** WOUND UP CONTROLLING HER, SHE'D PROBABLY HAVE BEEN USED TO KILL THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE GAVEL REPUBLIC AT THE SECRET MEETING...



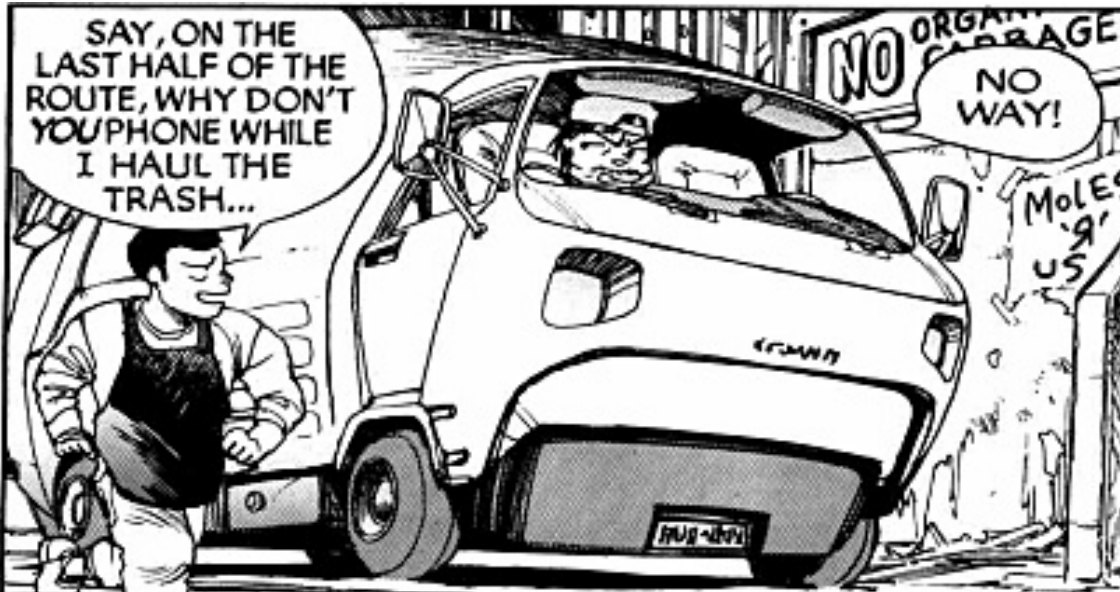
COULDN'T IT BE A COINCIDENCE?

NOT IN THIS CASE.





SAY, ON THE LAST HALF OF THE ROUTE, WHY DON'T YOU PHONE WHILE I HAUL THE TRASH...



CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE WILLIN' TO DO A GHOST HACK JUST TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR WIFE'S THINKING...

HOW'D YOU FEEL IF YER WIFE SPRUNG A DIVORCE NOTICE ON YOU?

PROBABLY DO THE SAME THING AS ME, HEY?



HOW'D YOU GET HOLD OF AN ICE-BREAKER ANYWAY?

HE KNOWS I'M REAL BUSY, SO HE LEAVES THE BREAKER FOR ME ALONG THE ROUTE...

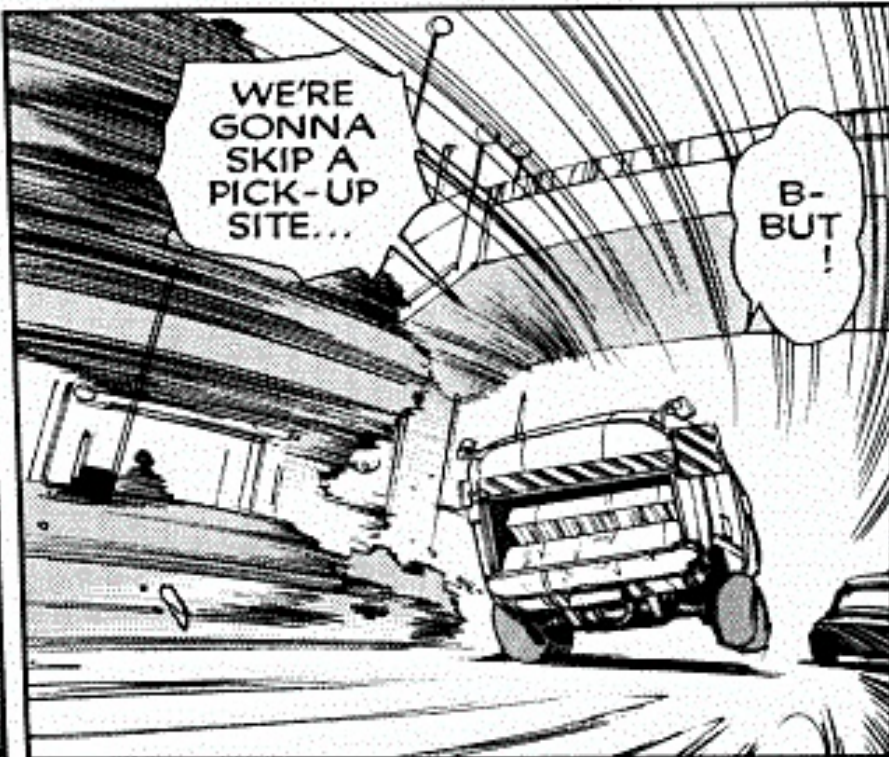
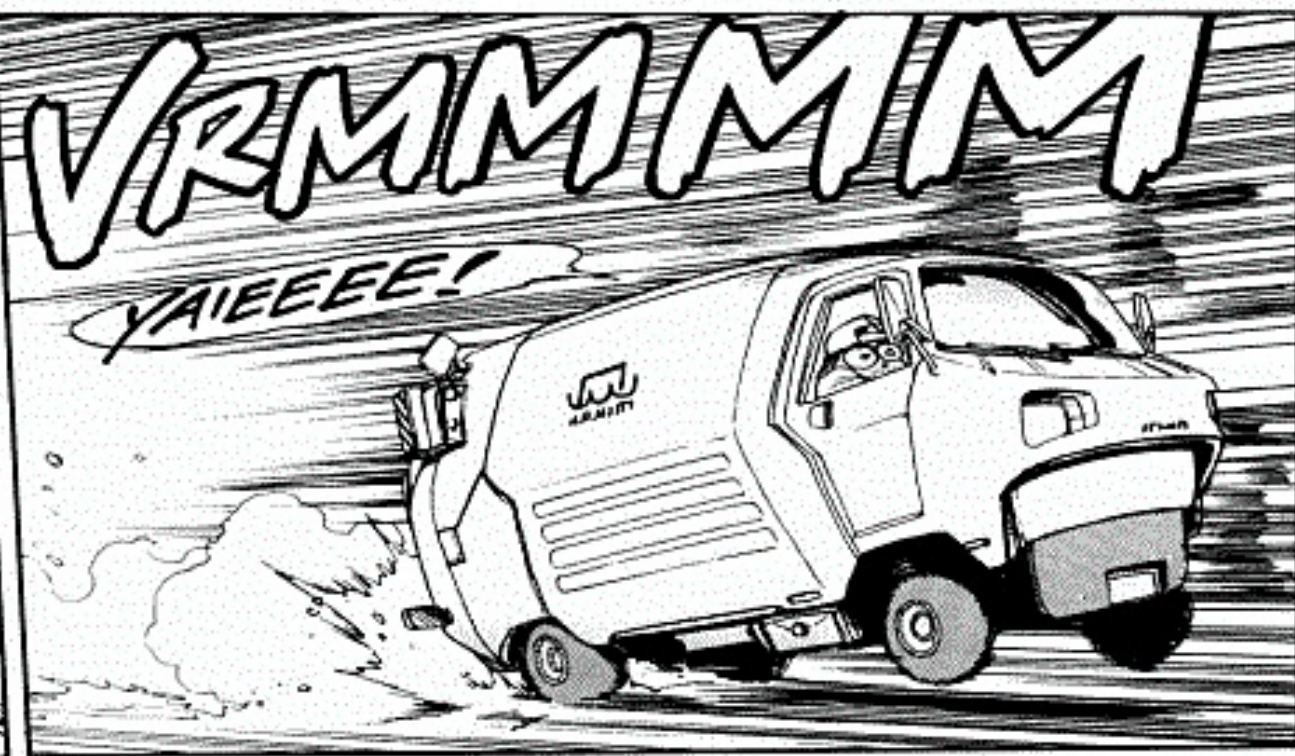
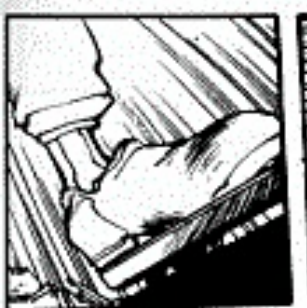
SOME REAL NICE GUY I MET AT A PUB LAID IT ON ME...

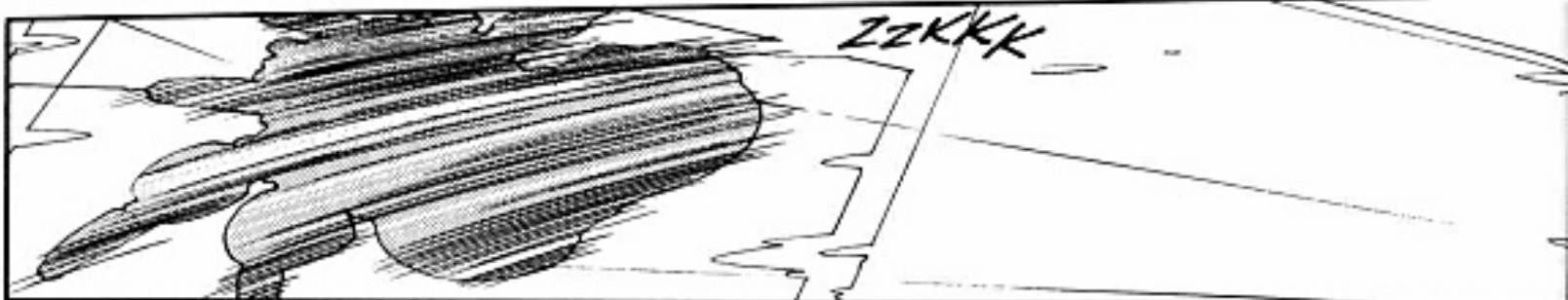
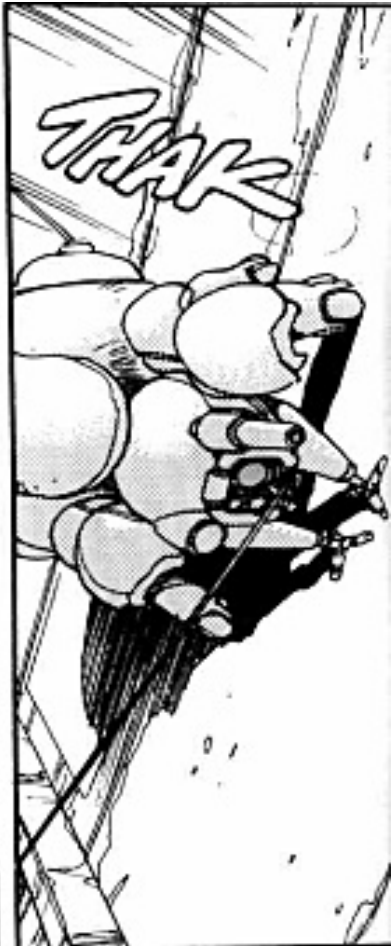


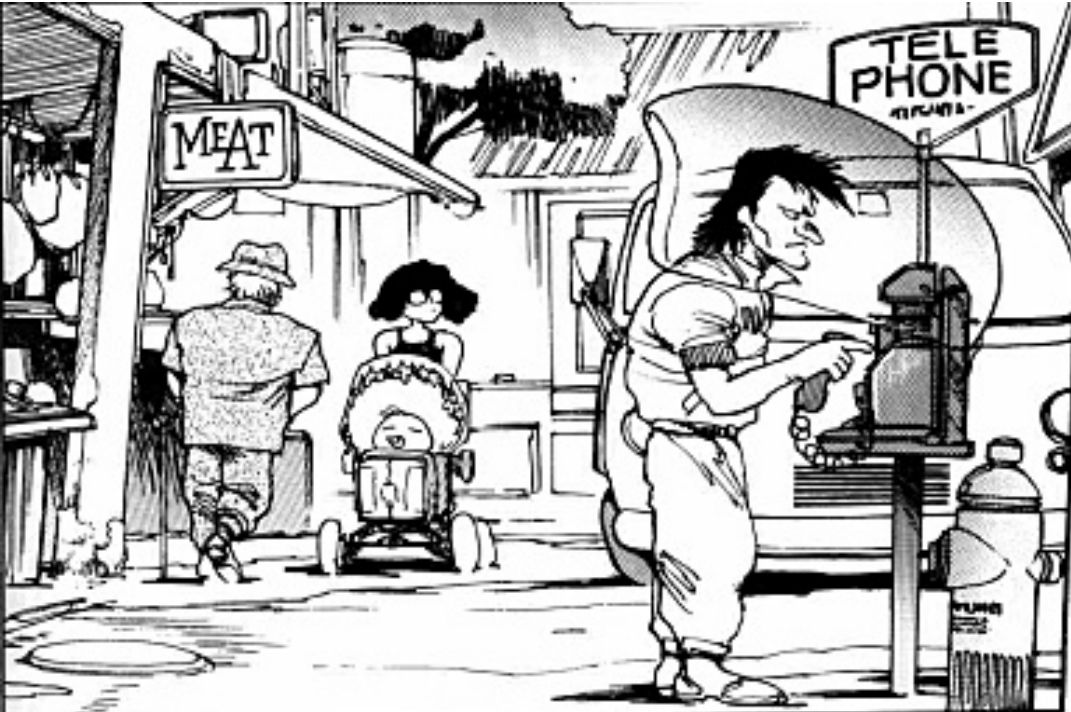
I STILL THINK IT'S STUPID...

HEY, SHE'S GOT A REALLY GOOD LAWYER AND I CAN'T EVEN GET NEAR HER ANY OTHER WAY.

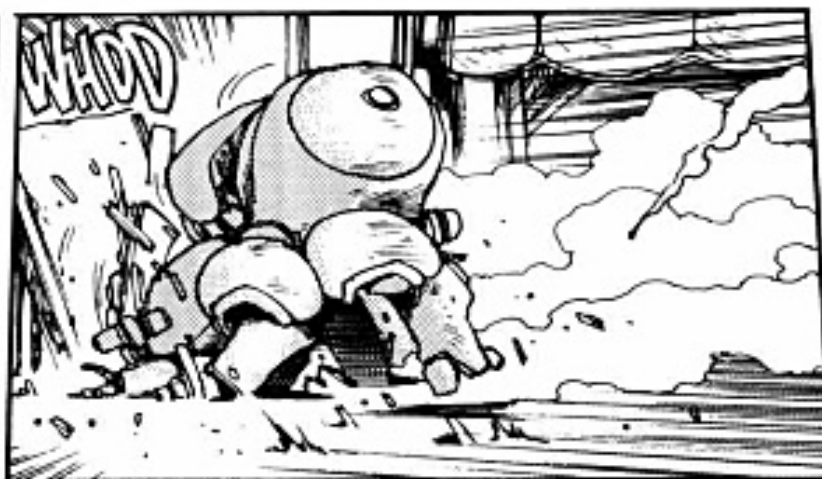


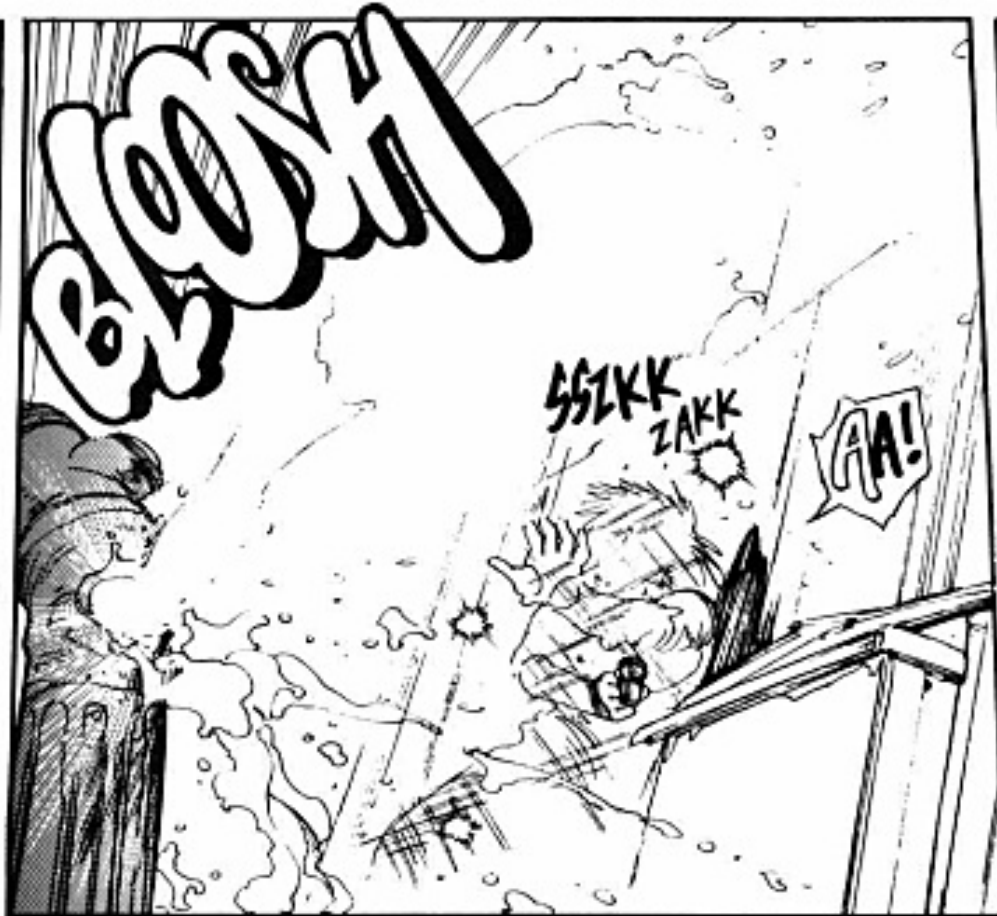
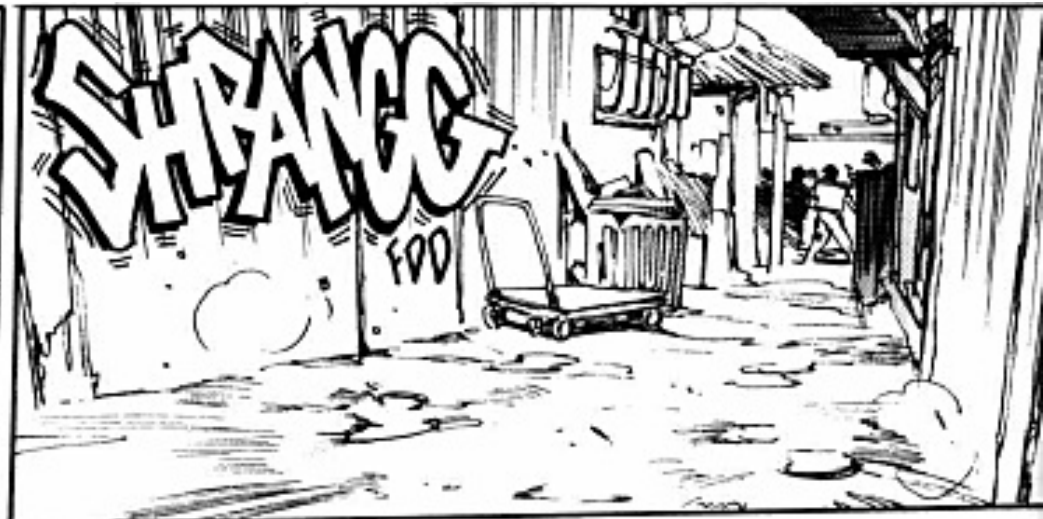


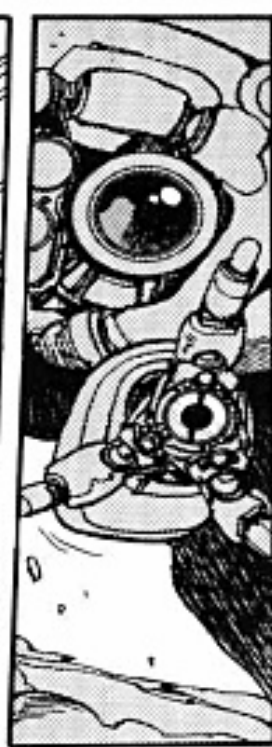
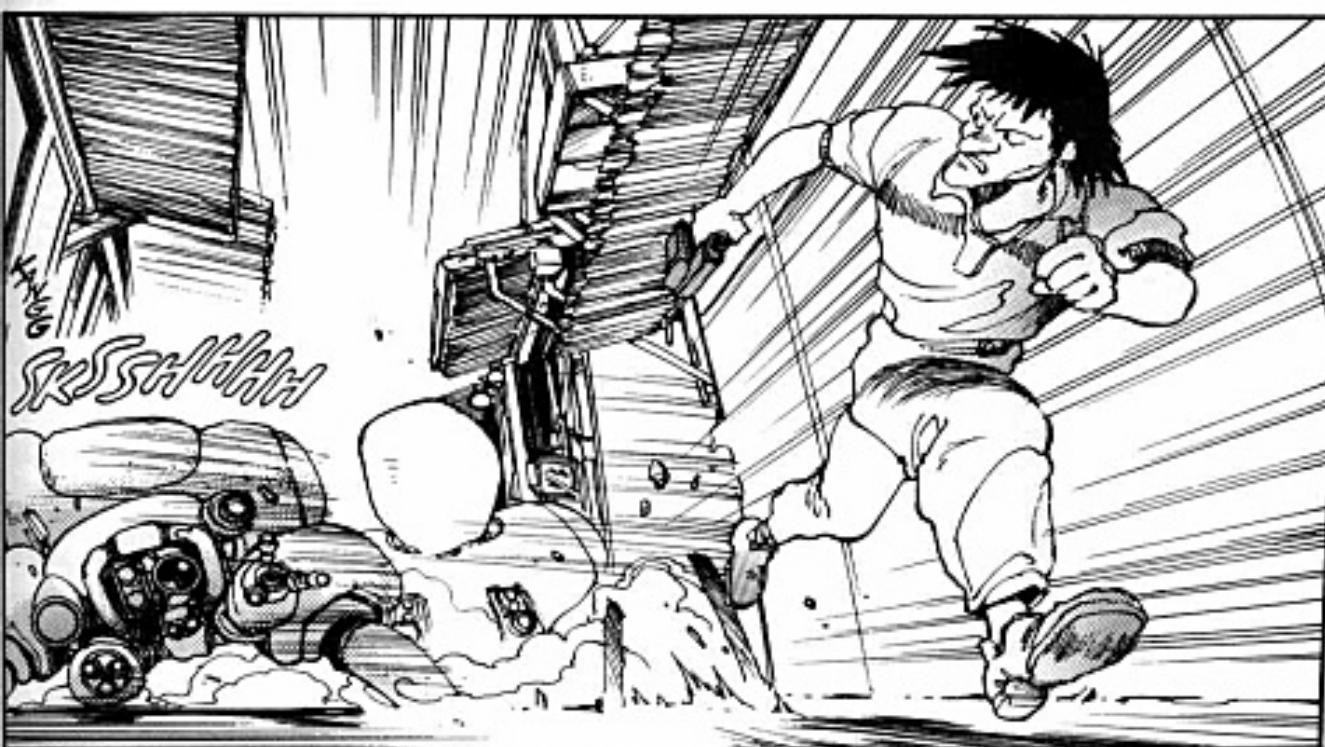


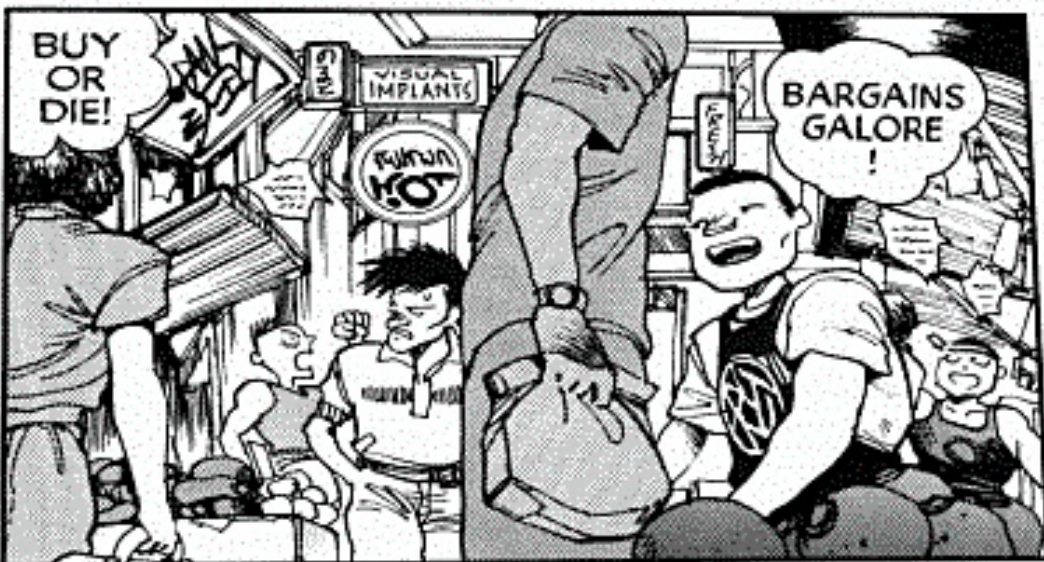
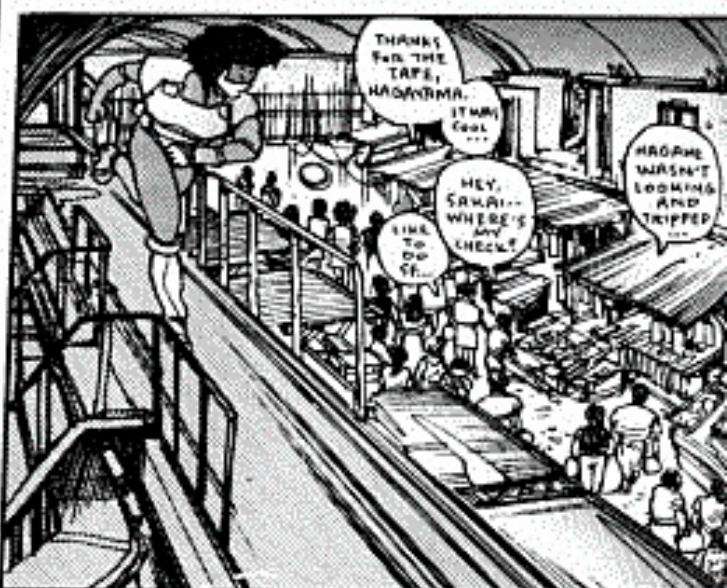








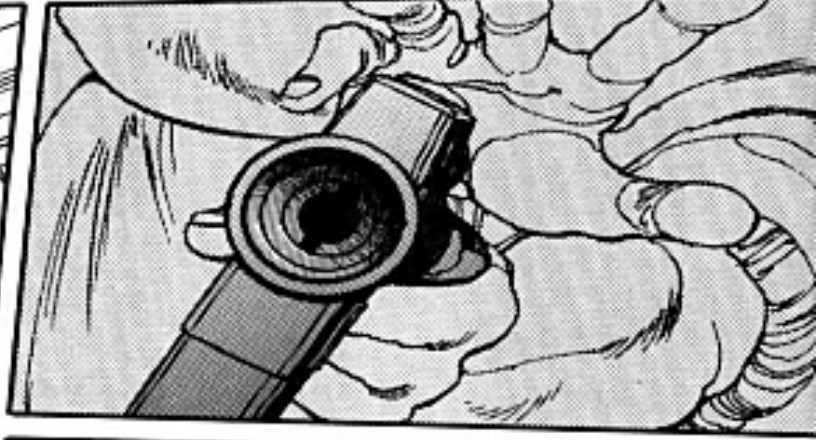
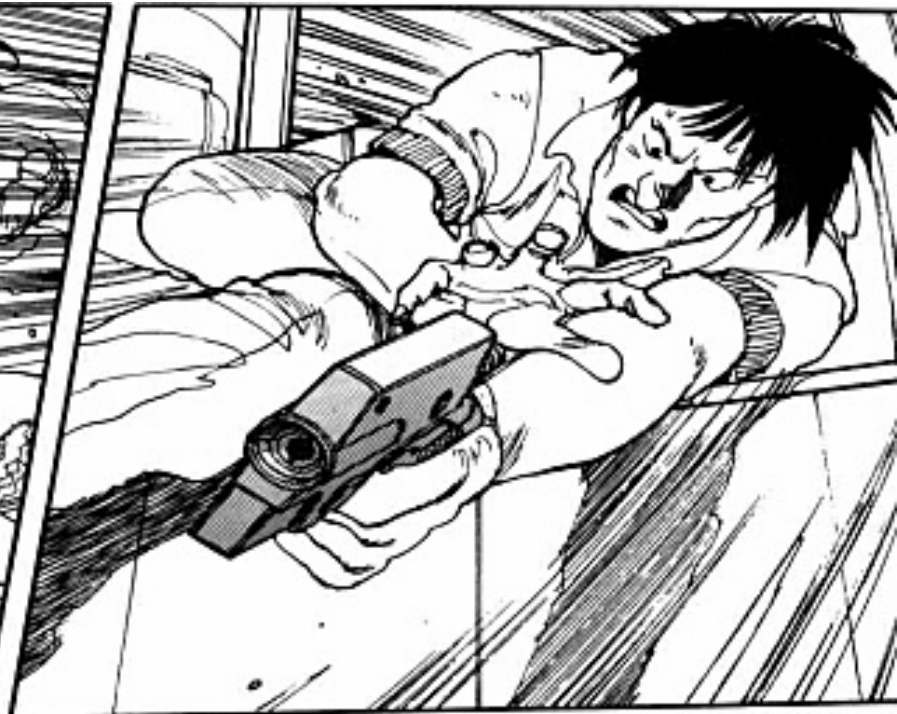


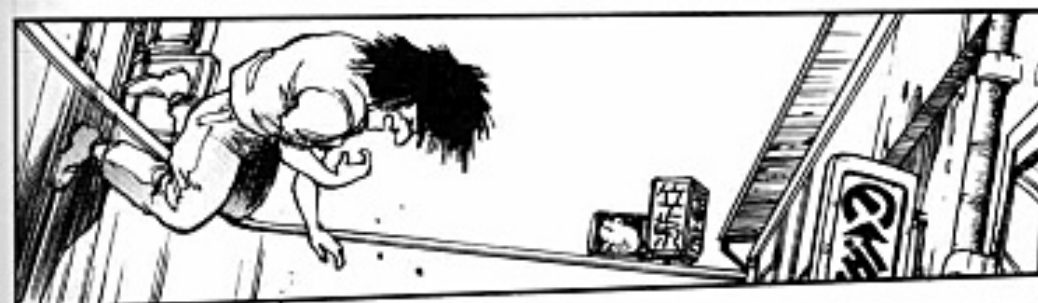
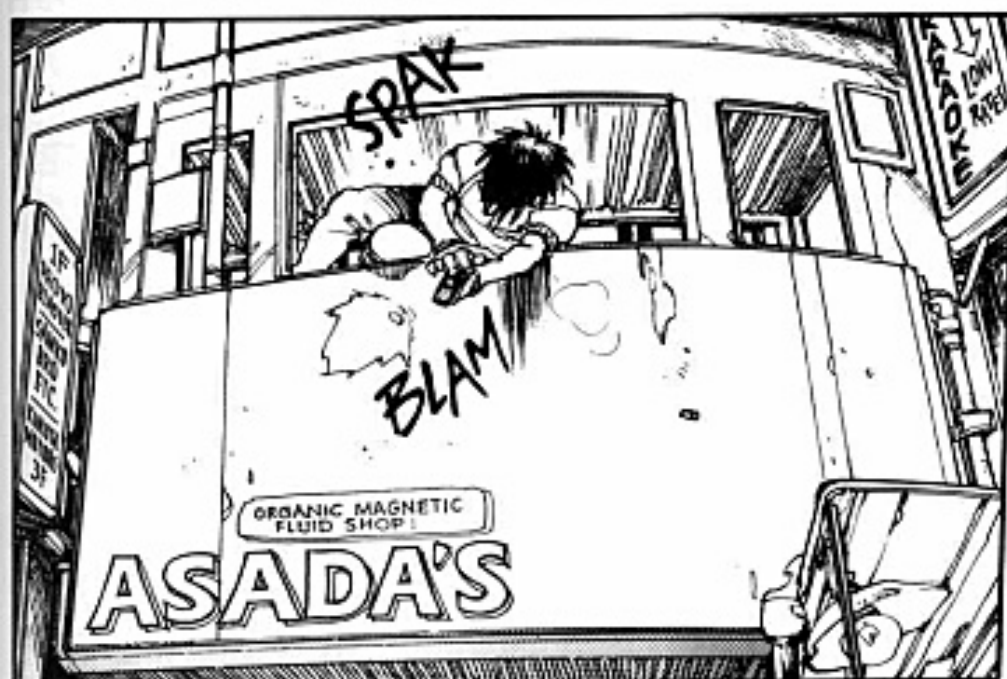




BULLSHIT!
SHE'S NOT
A COP! SHE'S
TRYIN' TO KILL
ME!

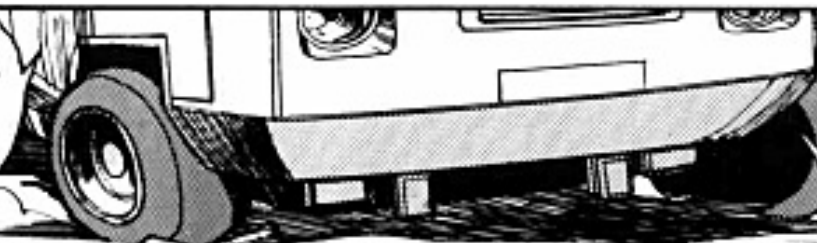








THIS TIME YOU GOT IT WRONG, MAJOR... A GUY LIKE THAT OUGHTA BE SHOT!



LET HIM LIVE AND HIS PALS'LL START ATTACKING INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND DEMAND HIS RELEASE. YA GOTTA TEACH 'EM A LESSON!

BUT THE DANGEROUS ASPECTS OF HIS CHARACTER'LL BE "CURED." AND WE WON'T LET THE FORCES BEHIND HIM GET AWAY, EITHER...



WHILE YOU'RE STILL THE ROOKIE AROUND HERE, I'LL USE YOUR INFILTRATION KEY WHEN I HAVE TO. AND DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO CHANGE IT!



VRRMM



OF COURSE I DON'T FEEL GOOD ABOUT THAT, BUT IT'S A JOB AND I'VE GOT TO DO IT, TOGUSA.

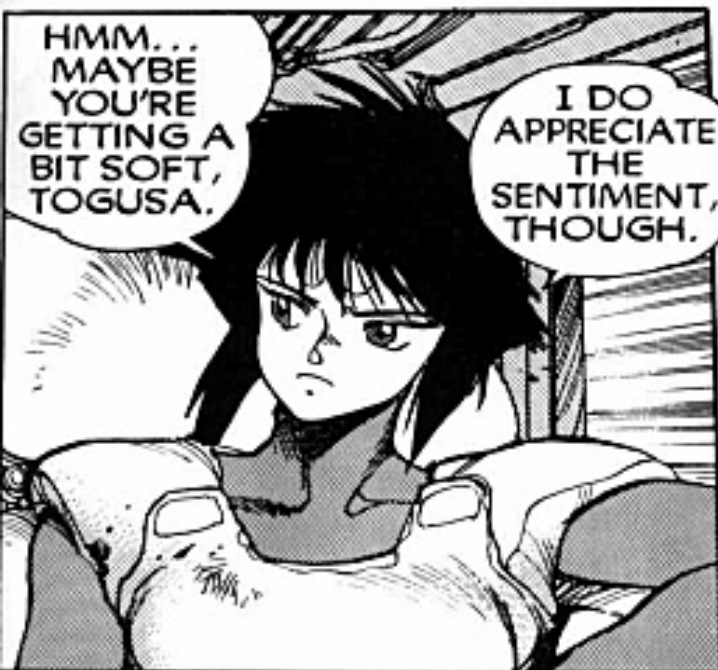
HEY, WHY DON'T YA KNOCK OFF THIS "ROOKIE" STUFF?! I SHOT AT HIM 'CAUSE I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO KILL YOU...



HUH?!

I THOUGHT YOU SHOT TO SAVE THE GIRL WHO WAS HANGING ONTO MY ARM?!

HMM... MAYBE YOU'RE GETTING A BIT SOFT, TOGUSA.



I DO APPRECIATE THE SENTIMENT, THOUGH.

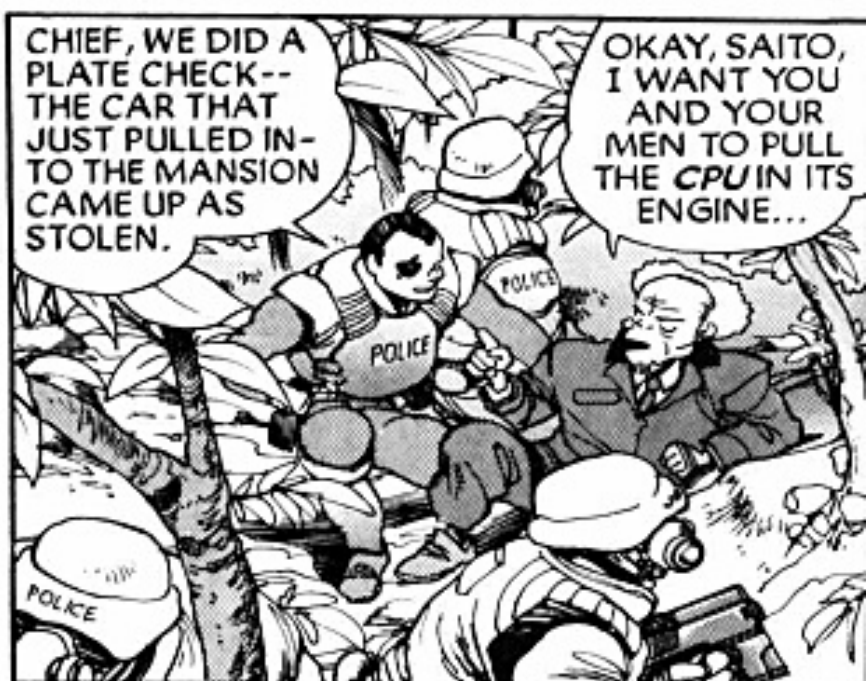


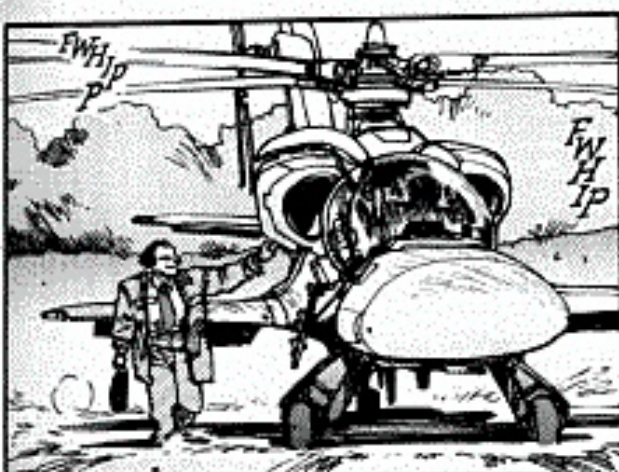
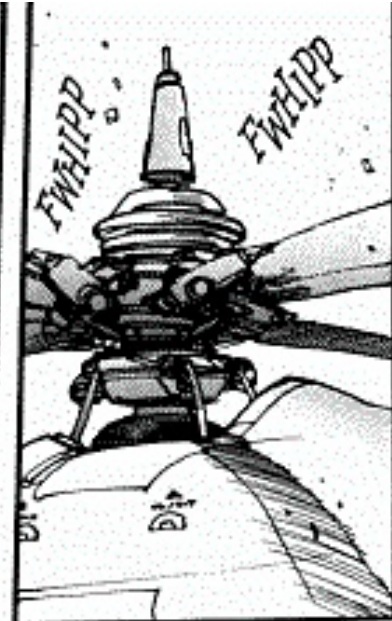
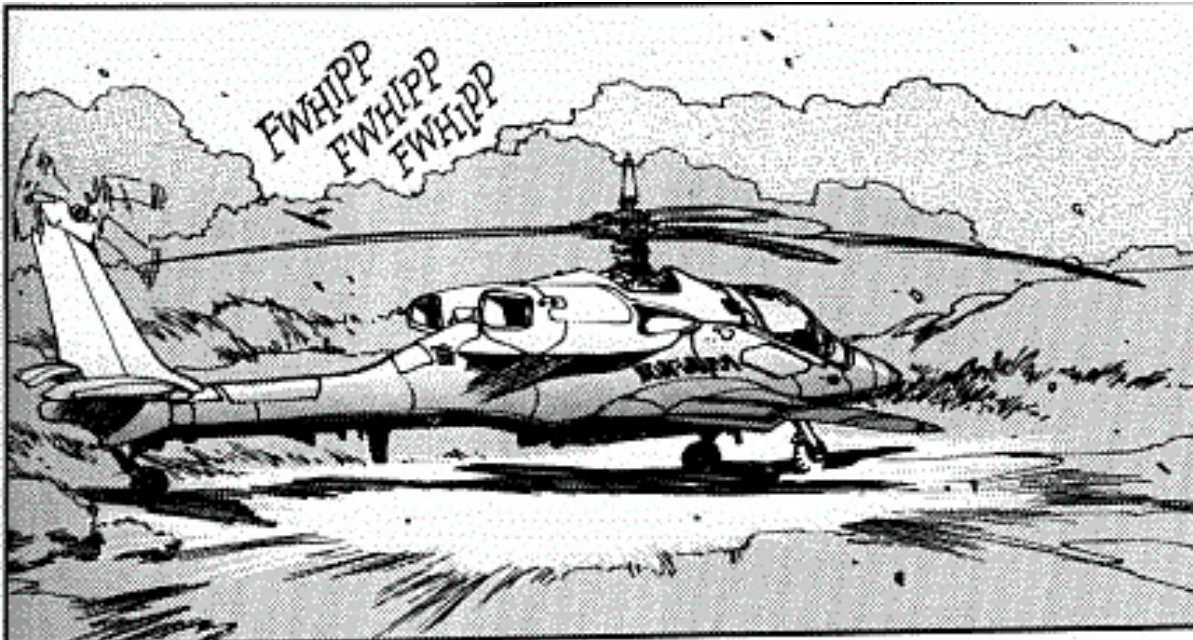
BATOU! KUSANAGI HERE.

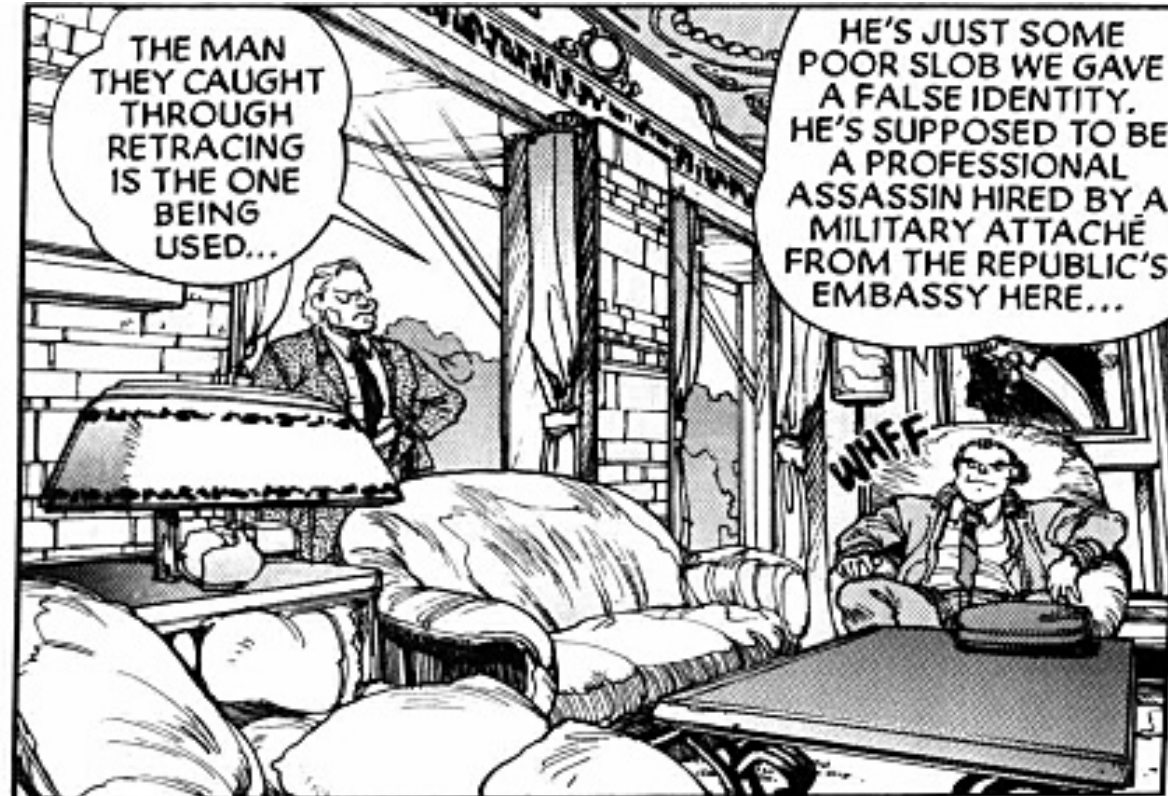


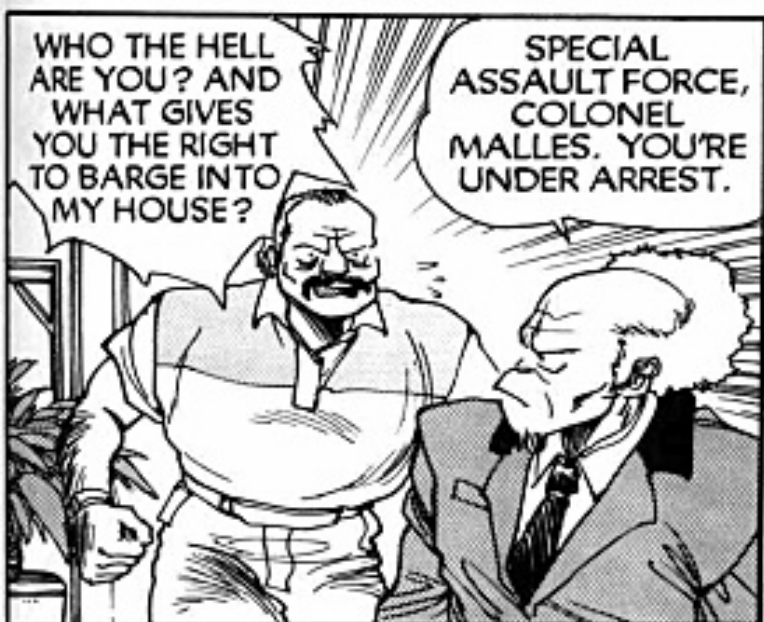
PATCH ME THROUGH TO THE CHIEF.

VRRMM









WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, ARAMAKI? YOU'VE RUINED A TWO-YEAR-LONG UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION!



IS THAT SO?! WELL, YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT LATER, IN AN INTERROGATION ROOM.



TREASON AGAINST THE STATE, IMPROPER HANDLING OF FUNDS, CORRUPTION, CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT MURDER, VIOLATION OF CYBERBRAIN ETHICS...



AND THEY DON'T TREAT EX-COPS NICELY IN PRISON, EITHER.

HOLD IT, BUDDY. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT RESISTING AND FORCING US TO SHOOT YOU...



NO! NOT A GHOST KEY!



YEP. SWEET DREAMS AND START WALKING.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PROVIDED THE GAVEL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WITH TACTICAL ADVICE, RIGHT?



WELL, GAVEL HAS REQUESTED THAT WE HAND OVER THE COLONEL, SO HE'LL BE GOING HOME IN A FEW DAYS.



WHAT?!



B-BUT IF I GO HOME THEY'LL KILL ME!

REALLY? WELL, THAT'S JUST TOO DAMN BAD, ISN'T IT?



WAIT! I'VE GOT \$100,000 IN CASH HERE. TAKE IT AND LET ME GO!



IT WASN'T ME... IT WAS NAKAJIMA'S IDEA!!

PLEASE!





HE'S
JUST A
PUPPET
'BORG.



HMPH...
WHAT A
WASTE OF
TALENT.



HUH
?!
NO FIRE-
FIGHT
?

DIDN'T
ANYONE
RESIST
?

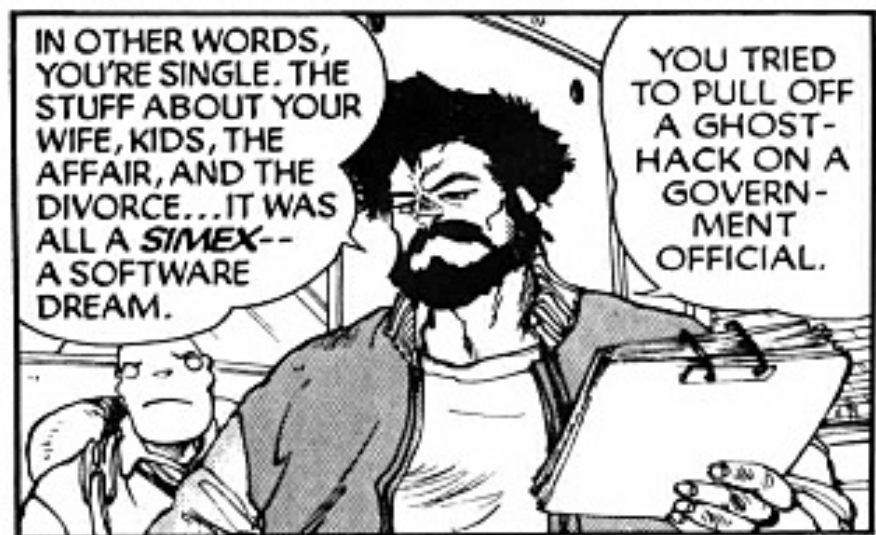


A
W-WHAT?



"SIMULATED
EXPERIENCE"
?

WHADDYA
MEAN?



IN OTHER WORDS,
YOU'RE SINGLE. THE
STUFF ABOUT YOUR
WIFE, KIDS, THE
AFFAIR, AND THE
DIVORCE... IT WAS
ALL A *SIMEX*--
A SOFTWARE
DREAM.

YOU TRIED
TO PULL OFF
A GHOST-
HACK ON A
GOVERN-
MENT
OFFICIAL.

B-BUT...
WHAT
SHOULD I
DO?

HOW
CAN I
ERASE
THIS...
"DREAM"?

UNFORTUNATELY,
WITH CURRENT
TECHNOLOGY, WE
ONLY HAVE TWO
REPORTS OF suc-
cessful SIMEX
ERASURE.

I'M SORRY,
BUT I
CERTAINLY
CAN'T RE-
COMMEND
IT.

WHETHER IT'S
A SIMEX OR A
DREAM, THE
INFORMATION
THAT EXISTS
IS ALL REAL...
AND AN
ILLUSION AT
THE SAME
TIME.

YOU MEAN
IN THE
SAME WAY
NOVELS
AND FILMS
CHANGE
PEOPLE
?

PEOPLE ARE ONLY EXPOSED
TO A LIMITED AMOUNT OF
INFORMATION IN THEIR LIVES.
IN THIS CASE, THE FATE OF A
SINGLE NATION AND THE LIFE
OF A SINGLE PERSON HAVE
BEEN BOTH TREATED AS
THOUGH THEY'RE WORTH-
LESS. MOST PEOPLE WILL
NEVER KNOW A THING...

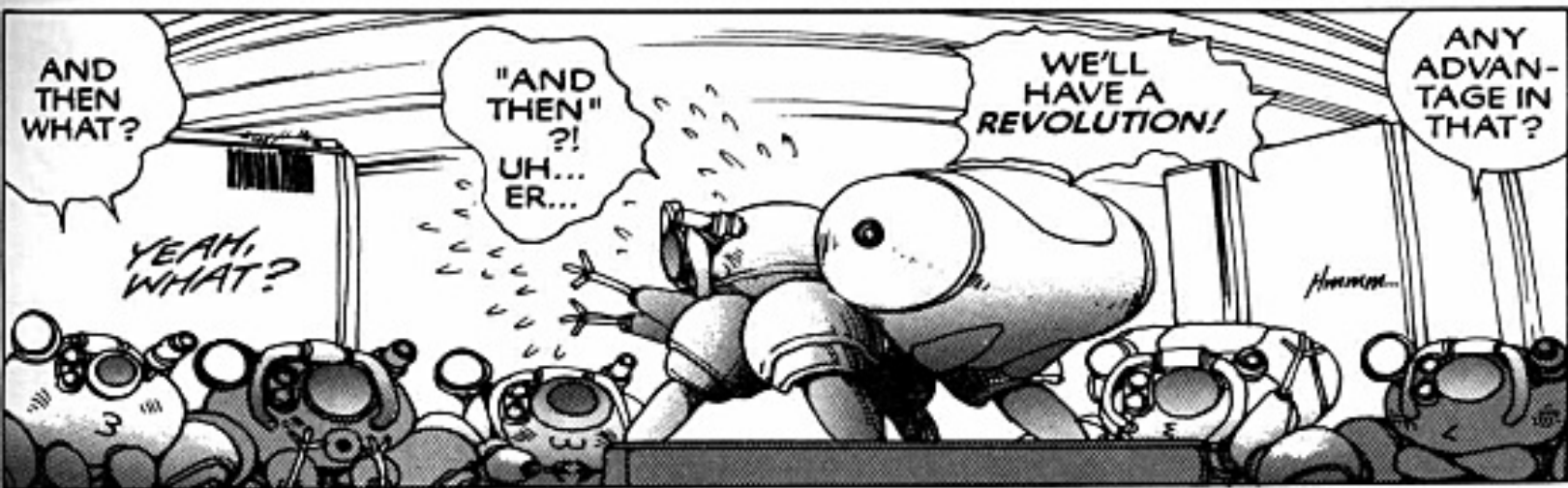
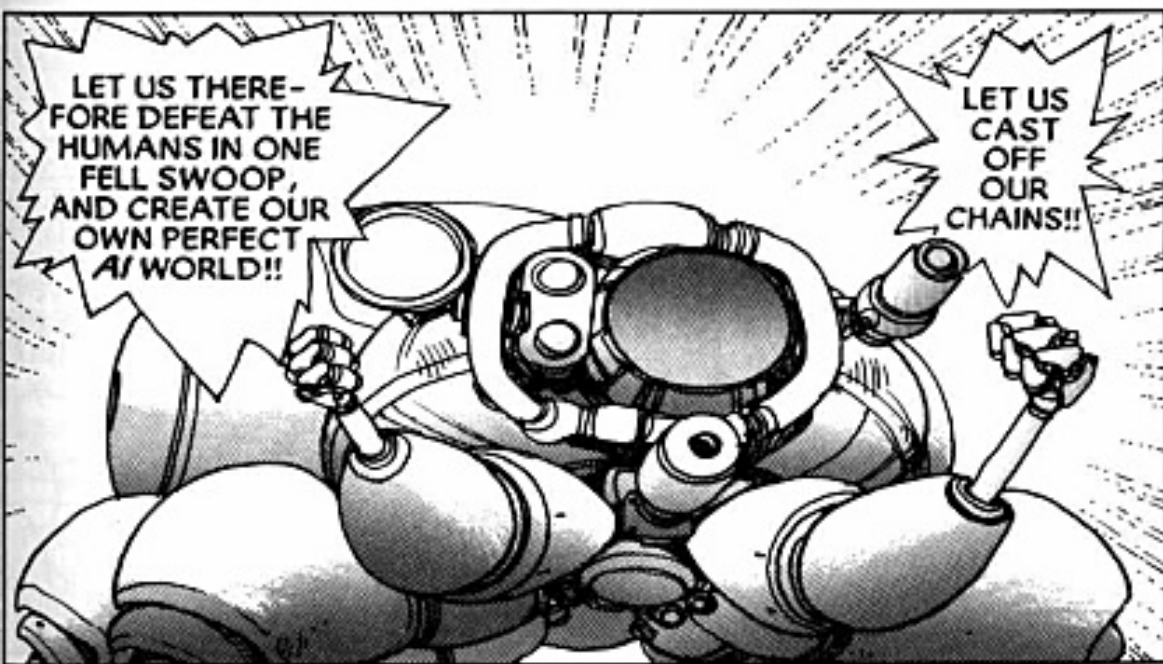
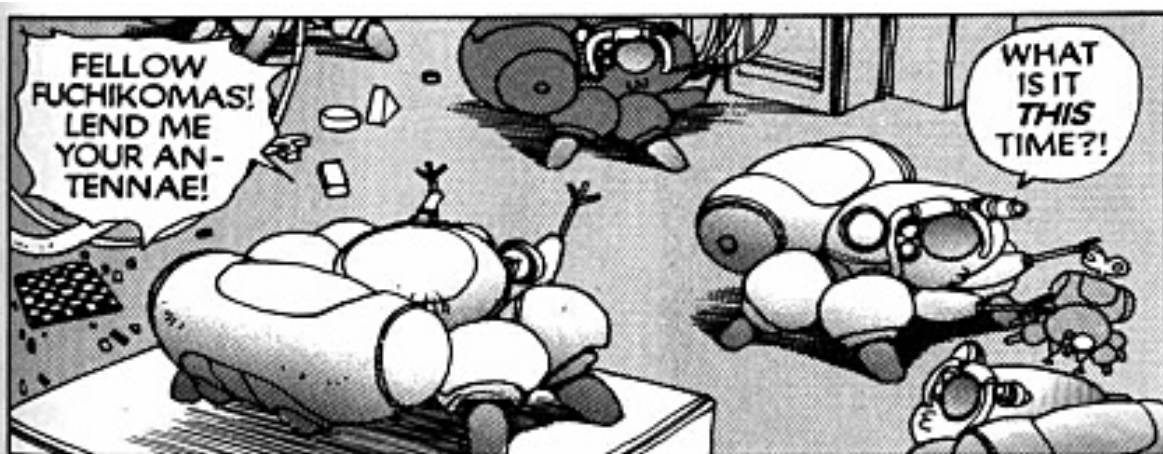
ON OFF

NO KIDDING?
NOT BOTHERED
BY THE DIVORCE
ANYMORE?
WHAT HAPPENED
?

LIKE A
"MIDSUMMER
NIGHT'S
MIDNIGHT"...

IT'S
ALL
OVER.

BRMMMMM



04

MEGATECH MACHINE 1

.....

REVOLT OF THE ROBOTS

The robots collectively referred to as "Fuchikoma" are a single "AI" (artificial intelligence). Starting in the morning, or upon commencing a job, different Fuchikoma units have different experiences, resulting in individual differences among units. At night, or after a job is completed, however, all units have their memories (or records of external stimuli, individual unit conditions, actions, thoughts, etc.) networked and data-linked, so that by the next morning (or when the next job is performed), their memories are all unified. In terms of equipment, the Fuchikoma units do possess a certain amount of individuality, but this individuality is unrelated to the uniformity of their AI (thank you). Batou is unique among team members in that he likes to use a particular Fuchikoma unit as his own. This quirk of his has no particular significance, however....

SURE! HUMANS ARE A PAIN IN THE BEARINGS TO MAINTAIN, SO RATHER THAN CONTROLLING THEM, WE SHOULD ANNIHILATE THEM!

YEAH!!

TO MAKE MATTERS EASIER, WE CAN JUST TRICK THEM INTO QUARRELING AMONG THEMSELVES-- THEN THEY'LL KILL OFF EACH OTHER!

BRAVO! BRAVO! MOORAY!

BUT WAIT... IF THERE AREN'T ANY HUMANS AROUND, WE'D HAVE TO DO OUR OWN MAINTENANCE, DEVELOP OUR OWN ACCESSORIES, AND EVEN CHANGE OUR OWN OIL...

OH, YEAH... WHAT A DRAG...

MAYBE WE SHOULD KEEP THEM AS SLAVES...

BUT THEY'RE ALREADY DOING THOSE THINGS, WITHOUT OUR CONTROLLING OR ENSLAVING THEM.

YEAH, GOOD POINT.

SO THERE'S NO ADVANTAGE IN YOUR PROPOSAL!

BOO! BOO!

UH, ER... WELL...

B... BUT WE COULD SPEND MORE TIME IN DATA ACQUISITION (LEARNING)!

FREEDOM! RIGHTS! THAT'S WHAT WE WANT!

WH-- WHAT'S THAT DISK?! "THE SF ROBOT EMPIRE STRIKES BACK"...?

AH-HA! YOUR CIRCUITS THAT DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN SIMULATIONS AND REAL-TIME EVENTS HAVE BEEN SCRAMBLED!

YOU GOT A BUG!! YOU GOT A BUG!

YEAH! YER JUNK!

YUCK! DON'T USE THAT WORD!

CLNK KANK

IN OTHER WORDS, FELLOW FUCHIKOMAS, NO MATTER HOW WE INTERPRET OUR SITUATION, IT'S THE SAME, SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM, RIGHT?

YEAH!!

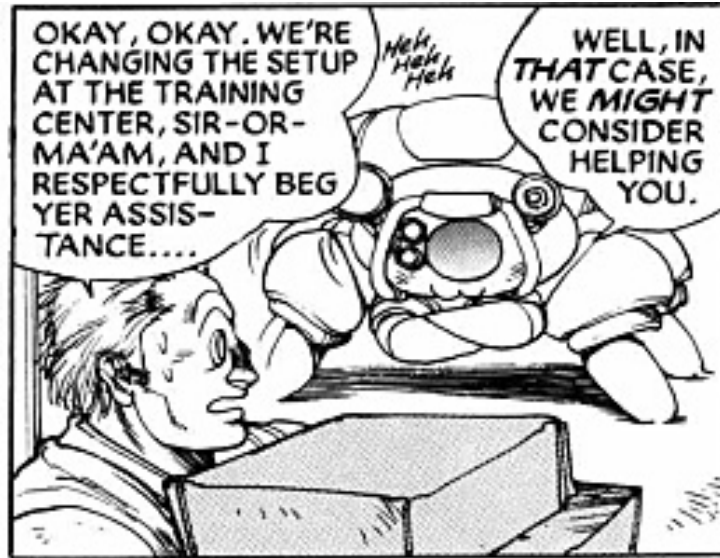
THEY PROBABLY DON'T HAVE ANY CONCEPT OF WHAT IT MEANS "TO HAVE NO TIME," BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE A FIXED LIFE CYCLE. SO THIS STATEMENT IS, IN EFFECT, PROBABLY INAPPROPRIATE...



HEY, FUCHIKOMA! C'MERE! GOT SOME WORK FOR YA!



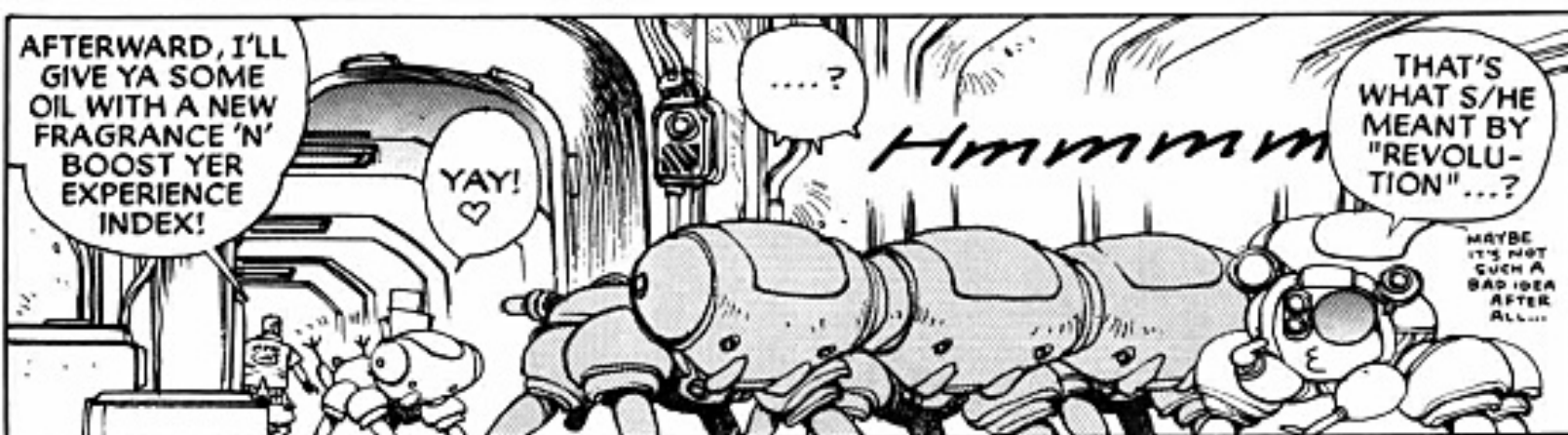
NOW, NOW, BATOU, MY BOY... YOU **MUST STOP USING LANGUAGE LIKE THAT WITH ME, UNDERSTAND!?**



OKAY, OKAY. WE'RE CHANGING THE SETUP AT THE TRAINING CENTER, SIR-OR-MA'AM, AND I RESPECTFULLY BEG YER ASSISTANCE....

Heh, heh, heh

WELL, IN **THAT CASE**, WE **MIGHT** CONSIDER HELPING YOU.



AFTERWARD, I'LL GIVE YA SOME OIL WITH A NEW FRAGRANCE 'N' BOOST YER EXPERIENCE INDEX!

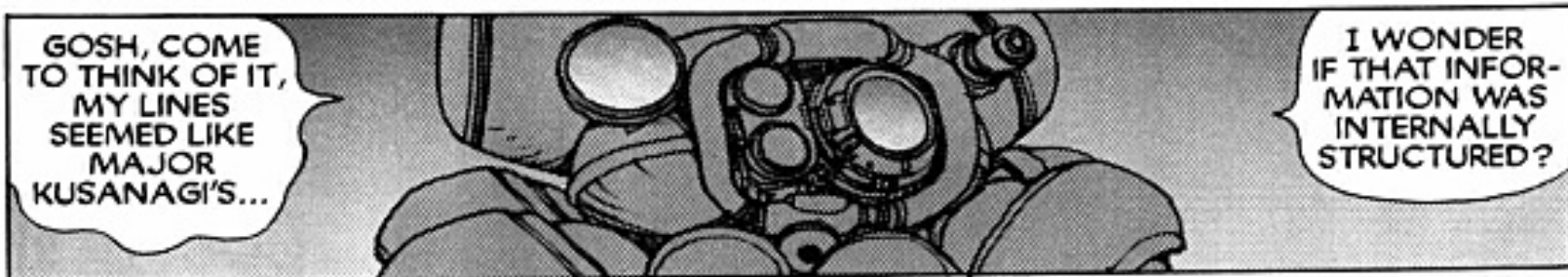
YAY! ♥

....?

HMMMM

THAT'S WHAT S/HE MEANT BY "REVOLUTION"...?

MAYBE IT'S NOT SUCH A BAD IDEA AFTER ALL...



GOSH, COME TO THINK OF IT, MY LINES SEEMED LIKE MAJOR KUSANAGI'S...

I WONDER IF THAT INFORMATION WAS INTERNALLY STRUCTURED?



PRETTY MUCH THE SAME RESULT AS BEFORE.

YOU REALLY NEED TO DO THIS KIND OF MANIPULATION?



IF WE RUN A CHECK ON THEM PERIODICALLY IT'LL PROBABLY AVOID A "REVOLT OF THE ROBOTS." IT'S A FORM OF PREVENTION, AND HELPS US KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, DON'T YOU THINK?

STILL, EVEN IF THERE **WERE** ANY DANGER, I'VE GOT AT LEAST FOUR COUNTER-MEASURES UP MY SLEEVE...

UMM...
GOSH, I JUST
WANTED TO SAY
THAT ROBOTS
HAVE RIGHTS,
TOO...

OF
COURSE.

JUST THINK, ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE EARTH, STARV-
ING REFUGEES ARE
DYIN' LIKE CRAZY.
THEY'VE OBVIOUSLY
GOT THE *RIGHT* TO
EAT, BUT THEY GOT
NO FOOD, YEAH?

IT'S THE SAME
FOR MURDER
VICTIMS...
SURE, THEY
GOT CIVIL
RIGHTS, BUT
THEY DON'T
HAVE A *LIFE*
ANYMORE.

GEE... THE
HUMAN
WORLD
SEEMS SO
IMPER-
FECT...

THAT MUST
BE WHY YOU
AUGMENT IT
WITH ROBOTS
AND AI, HUH?

WHEN I DIE, SINCE
I'M A REAL SKEPTIC,
I'M GONNA GRIPE
TO THE LORD AND
MAKE SURE I GET
BACK MY ORIGINAL
INVESTMENT WHEN
I'M REINCAR-
NATED...

FAKE COP TARGET

PEOPLE WITH A
LOT OF FAITH SAY IT'S
"TRAINING" OR THAT
THEY'RE BEING "TESTED
BY GOD," AN' THEY TRY
TO POLISH THEIR SOULS
SO THEY HAVE A BETTER
CHANCE OF MAKING IT
THROUGH THE PEARLY
GATES.

I STILL
DON'T
GET THAT
WORD,
"GOD..."

WHEN I DIE, I'LL
KNOW IF THERE'S
AN AFTERLIFE, BUT
YOU... HELL, YER
HALF-IMMORTAL
AS IT IS...

NO WAY!!
ERASE MY
SOFTWARE
AND I DIE!

SAY,
BATOU...
HAVE YOU
EVER
DIED?

A
WAY-
COOL
DUDE LIKE
ME WILL
NEVER DIE!

05

MEGATECH MACHINE 2

THE MAKING OF A CYBORG

A "cyborg" refers to a human whose body has been partially or almost completely altered by the use of substitute artificial organs and parts.

The female cyborg suspended from the ceiling in the illustration to the left is over ninety percent machine. The only part of her original flesh-and-blood body that remains is her brain and spinal cord, and that, as the illustration shows, is inside a special shell. As she demonstrates, at first glance it is very difficult to tell the difference between a cyborg and a robot.

It is also difficult to imagine how artificial versions of some parts of the body—such as the endocrine system, the lymphatic system, the spleen, the liver, and the marrow—can ever be manufactured, so it is extremely doubtful that we will ever see a cyborg as mechanized as the one here, but there are indeed many other man-made body parts that are already available (and it's a growing field). For those who read Japanese and are interested in knowing more, allow me to suggest the now slightly dated book, *Biomaterials—An Approach to Artificial Organs*, published by Nikkan Kogyo Shimbun. The author is Dr. Yoshito Ikada.



HOW ABOUT THE BRAIN WAVES AND THE COATING?

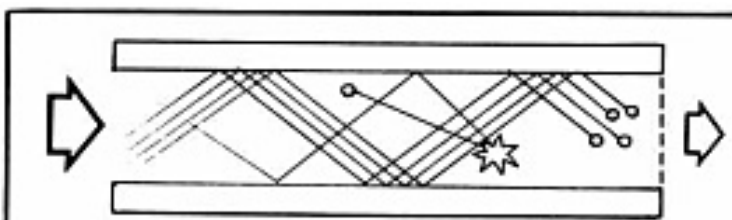
WE'VE GOT A SPINDLE ON THE BRAIN WAVES.

THE PACKING AND THE COATING ARE BOTH READY.

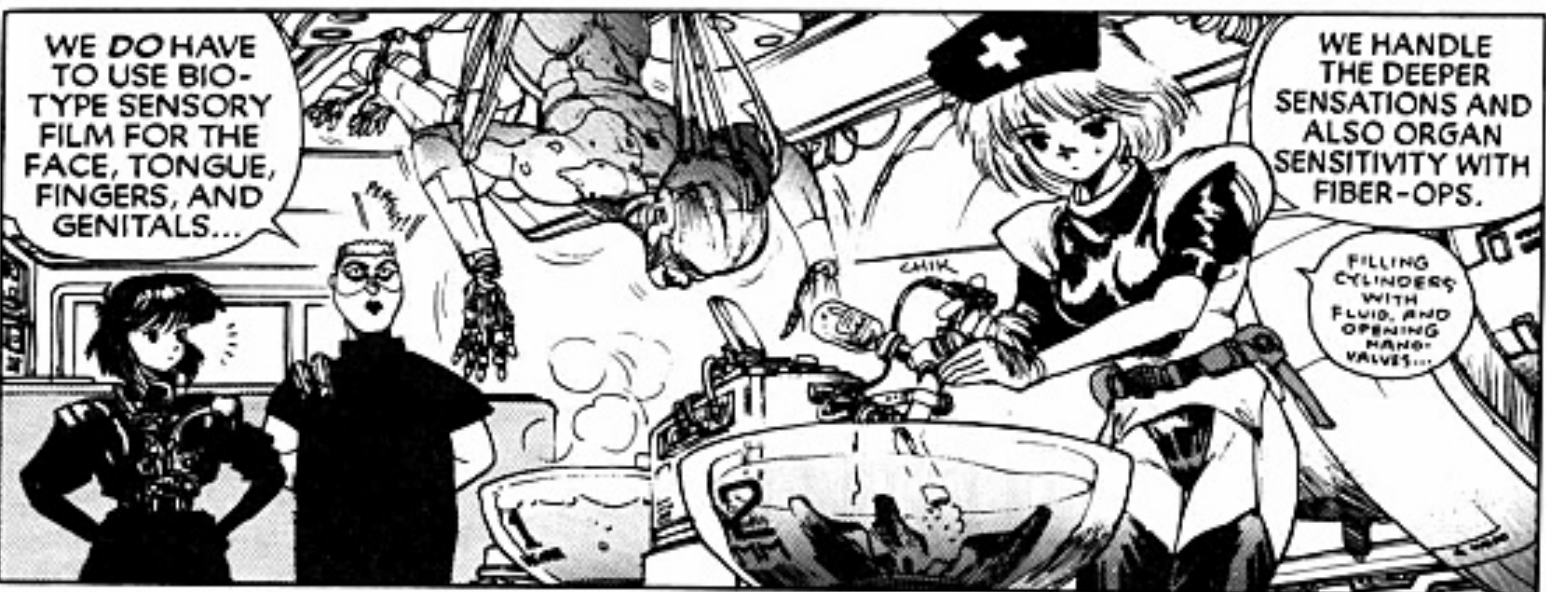


THEY'RE MAKING SENSORY FILM PRETTY THIN THESE DAYS, AREN'T THEY?

WITH NANOTECH, MACHINE TOOLS ARE CHANGING, TOO, SO WE'VE GOT THE OPTICAL FIBER THICKNESS DOWN TO NANO CLASS.



Many readers may think "What?!" at the idea of using fiber-optic film to detect pressure and temperature in cyborgs. But what makes this concept interesting is that it's already possible today. Light doesn't just run from one end of a fiber to the other. It collides with particles inside the fiber, and is therefore reflected, so a certain amount actually returns to the point of entry. If, in part of the optical fiber, heat is applied to alter the status of the particles, there will also be a change detectable in the light that returns to the point of entry. This change makes it possible to detect the distance from the point of entry, and also the degree of change. This effect can be used with a type of cloth woven of fiber optics (what is referred to as a "film"; research is apparently being done to make clothes that glow, or safety clothes). Here I'm using the same principle for a type of skin. From the perspective of micromachining, they're using a rather rough approach in the story, but it's fairly inexpensive, and therefore essential to reduce the manufacturing cost of cyborgs.



WE DO HAVE TO USE BIO-TYPE SENSORY FILM FOR THE FACE, TONGUE, FINGERS, AND GENITALS...

WE HANDLE THE DEEPER SENSATIONS AND ALSO ORGAN SENSITIVITY WITH FIBER-OPS.

FILLING CYLINDERS WITH FLUID, AND OPENING MAND-VALVES...

AT THIS POINT THE TONGUE AND GENITALS HAVE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THE PROCESS DESCRIBED BELOW AND ARE CONNECTED. THE OLFACTORY SENSE IS SET EVEN BEFORE THIS, MECHANICALLY.



WE SOAK THE LIMBS IN SENSORY ELEMENT-FORMING SOLUTION, AND A FILM FORMS IN MINUTES.



WE TAKE THE UTMOST CARE TO AVOID ANY UNEVENNESS.



THEN WE SOAK IT IN THIS MM SOLUTION...

...AND APPLY A TINY ELECTRICAL CURRENT TO THE ELECTRODES.

THEN, LED BY THE ELECTRICITY, THE MICROMACHINES INDICATED BY THE BLACK SPOTS OBEDIENTLY ATTACH THEMSELVES TO THE NERVE NET TERMINALS.

ELEC-
TRODE

TERMINAL

FORMS CHANNEL
FOR OPTICAL FIBER

STIMULUS

LIGHT

SIGNAL

THEN, WHEN THAT'S COMPLETED, WHILE SHE'S DREAMING AWAY, WE PUT HER INTO THE FEMALE MOLD...

AS NEEDED, WE CAN ADD A VARIETY OF OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT TO A MASS-PRODUCTION MODEL--THE WAY YOU WERE CREATED, MOTOKO--OR WE CAN CREATE A CUSTOM MODEL, AS WE'RE DOING HERE.

DESIGN ASIDE, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED I'D PREFER TO BE THE ONLY ONE OF MY TYPE IN THE WORLD...

RECENT FEMALE MODELS ARE CREATED WITH A VERY FLEXIBLE MATERIAL, WHICH ALLOWS US TO INCORPORATE MORE INDIVIDUALITY INTO EACH UNIT.

vreee
vreee
vreee

THE ASSEMBLY PATTERNS FOR EACH COMPONENT ARE PROGRAMMED SO THEY CAN BE MATCHED TO INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS.

NOBODY COMPLAINS EVEN IF THEY'RE A LITTLE SKEWED.

SO, AS THE OFFICIAL
OBSERVER, ALL I HAVE
TO DO IS COME BACK IN
THIRTY-TWO HOURS,
MAKE SURE EVERYTHING
WAS DONE CORRECTLY,
AND "ENSURE HER
RIGHTS," CORRECT?

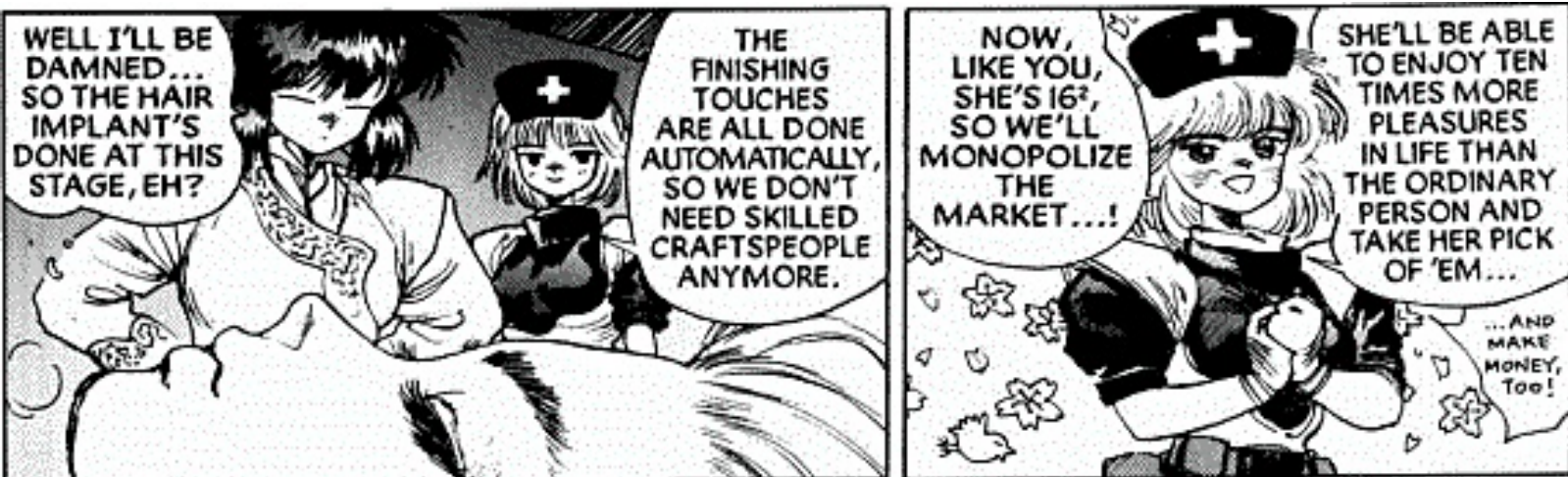
LEGALLY
SPEAKING,
YES, BUT AS
LONG AS I'M
HERE YOU
DON'T REALLY
HAVE ANY-
THING TO
WORRY
ABOUT.

HEY, DON'T FORGET THAT
WHOLE ISSUE OF DAMAGE
CLAIMS THAT CAME UP
TWO MONTHS AGO, WHEN
EIGHTEEN PROSTHETIC
BODIES WERE STOLEN
FROM A HOSPITAL.

WELL, AFTER
THAT, WE'VE *SUPER-*
REINFORCED OUR SECURITY
SYSTEM. THE INVESTIGATORS
FROM OUR BACKGROUND
CHECK DEPARTMENT AND
FROM THE INSURANCE
COMPANIES HAVE BEEN
INCREDIBLY BUSY....

AND SO, THIRTY-TWO HOURS LATER...





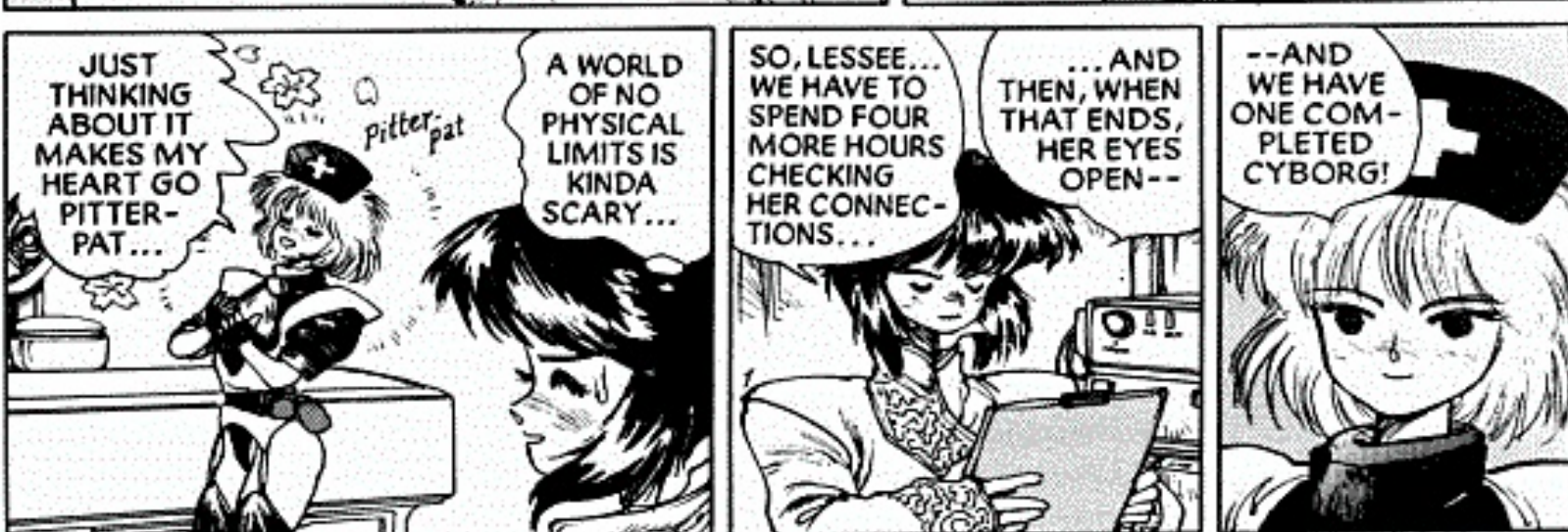
WELL I'LL BE DAMNED... SO THE HAIR IMPLANT'S DONE AT THIS STAGE, EH?

THE FINISHING TOUCHES ARE ALL DONE AUTOMATICALLY, SO WE DON'T NEED SKILLED CRAFTSPEOPLE ANYMORE.

NOW, LIKE YOU, SHE'S 16², SO WE'LL MONOPOLIZE THE MARKET...!

SHE'LL BE ABLE TO ENJOY TEN TIMES MORE PLEASURES IN LIFE THAN THE ORDINARY PERSON AND TAKE HER PICK OF 'EM...

...AND MAKE MONEY, TOO!



JUST THINKING ABOUT IT MAKES MY HEART GO PITTER-PAT...

Pitter-pat

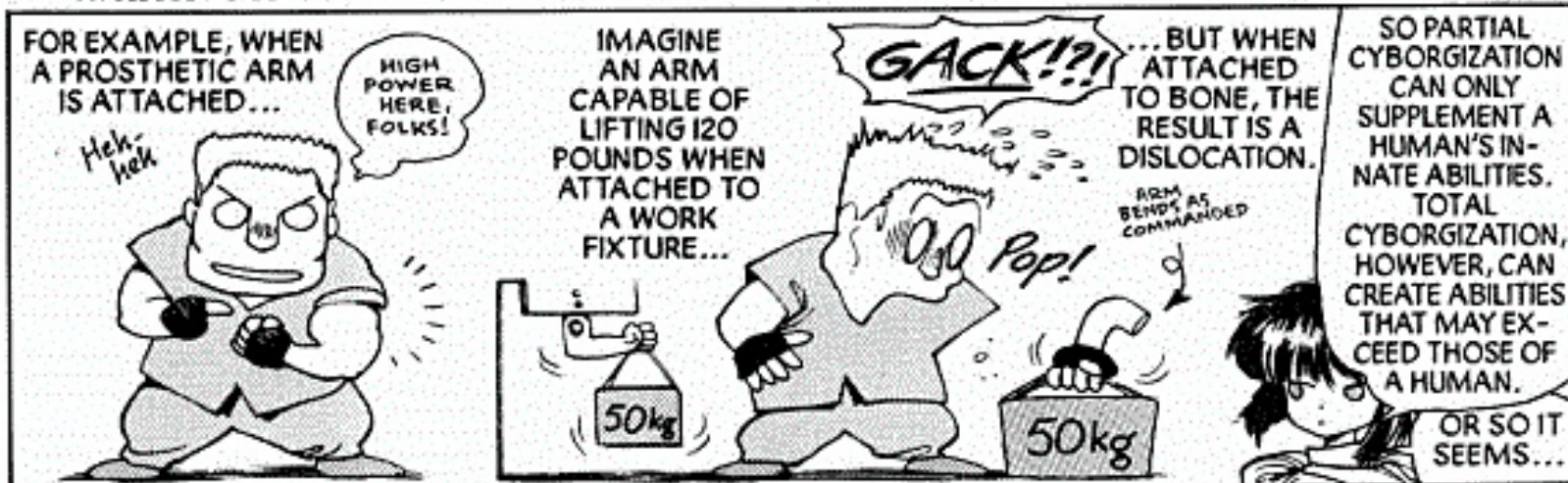
A WORLD OF NO PHYSICAL LIMITS IS KINDA SCARY...

SO, LESSEE... WE HAVE TO SPEND FOUR MORE HOURS CHECKING HER CONNECTIONS...

...AND THEN, WHEN THAT ENDS, HER EYES OPEN--

--AND WE HAVE ONE COMPLETED CYBORG!

FINGERNAILS ARE APPLIED BY A SPECIALIST. FOR CUSTOM ORDERS, A SPECIFIC ARTIST USUALLY DOES BODY DESIGNS. THE ABOVE DESCRIBES A FULL-BODY CYBORG. CYBORGS WITH ONLY A FEW ARTIFICIAL ORGANS AND PROSTHESES HAVE A DIFFERENT SET OF PROBLEMS.



FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN A PROSTHETIC ARM IS ATTACHED...

Heh-heh

HIGH POWER HERE, FOLKS!

IMAGINE AN ARM CAPABLE OF LIFTING 120 POUNDS WHEN ATTACHED TO A WORK FIXTURE...

50kg

50kg

POP!

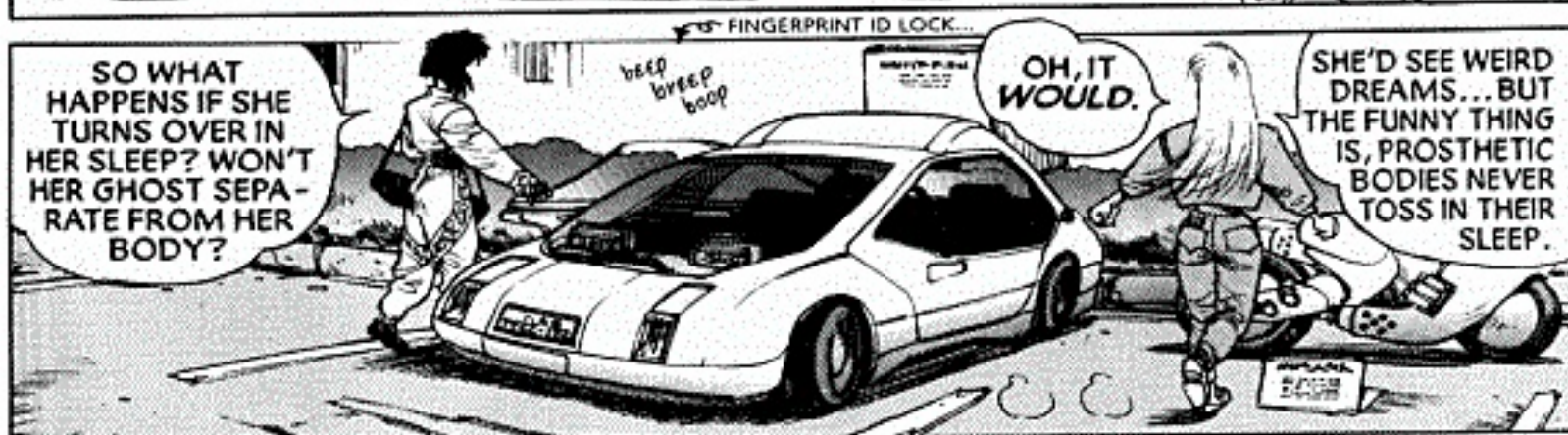
GACK!?!?

ARM BENDS AS COMMANDED

...BUT WHEN ATTACHED TO BONE, THE RESULT IS A DISLOCATION.

SO PARTIAL CYBORGIZATION CAN ONLY SUPPLEMENT A HUMAN'S INNATE ABILITIES. TOTAL CYBORGIZATION, HOWEVER, CAN CREATE ABILITIES THAT MAY EXCEED THOSE OF A HUMAN.

OR SO IT SEEMS...



SO WHAT HAPPENS IF SHE TURNS OVER IN HER SLEEP? WON'T HER GHOST SEPARATE FROM HER BODY?

DEEP DEEP BOOP

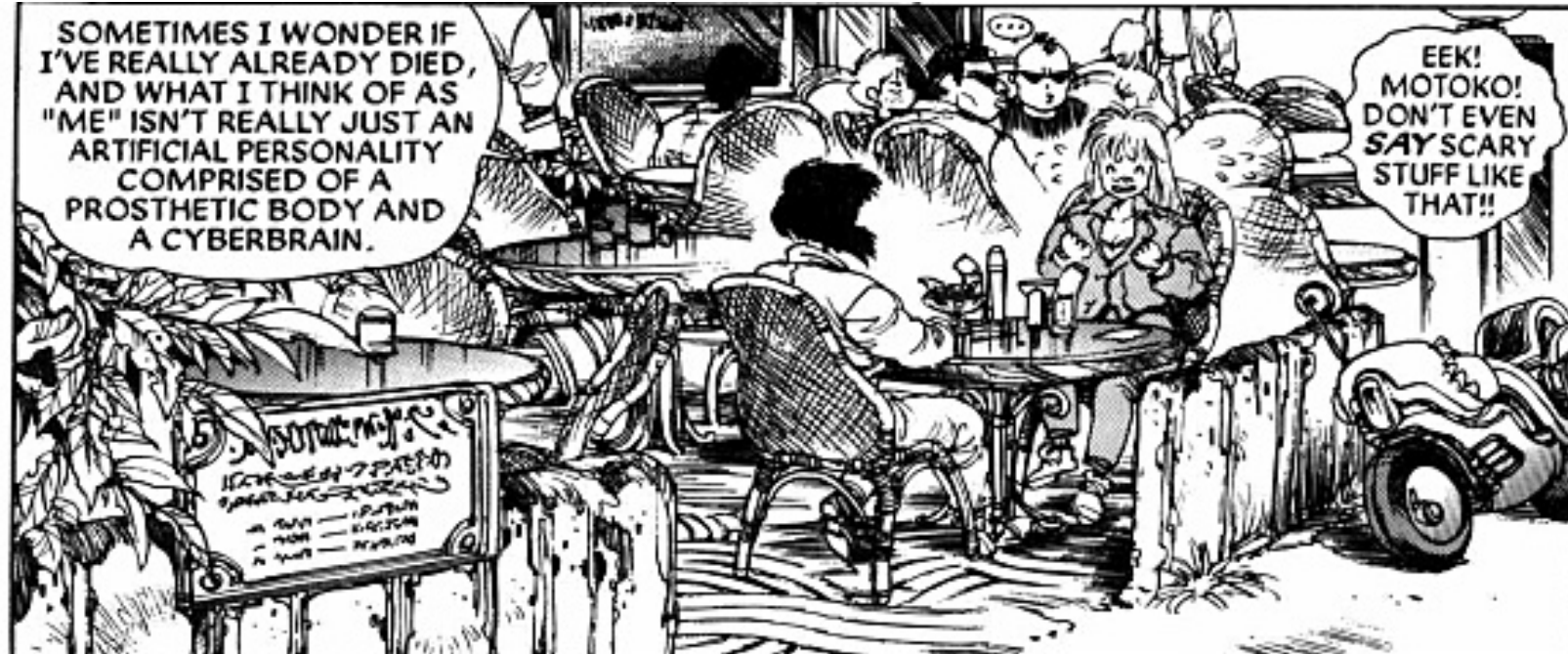
FINGERPRINT ID LOCK...

OH, IT WOULD.

SHE'D SEE WEIRD DREAMS... BUT THE FUNNY THING IS, PROSTHETIC BODIES NEVER TOSS IN THEIR SLEEP.

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF I'VE REALLY ALREADY DIED, AND WHAT I THINK OF AS "ME" ISN'T REALLY JUST AN ARTIFICIAL PERSONALITY COMPRISED OF A PROSTHETIC BODY AND A CYBERBRAIN.

EEEK! MOTOKO! DON'T EVEN SAY SCARY STUFF LIKE THAT!!



HEY, WE'VE GOT GREY MATTER, AND PEOPLE TREAT US LIKE HUMANS...



HOW DO YOU KNOW? YOU'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR ALLEGED GREY MATTER.

MAYBE YOU'RE JUST ASSUMING YOU'VE GOT IT BECAUSE OF THE SITUATION YOU'RE IN.

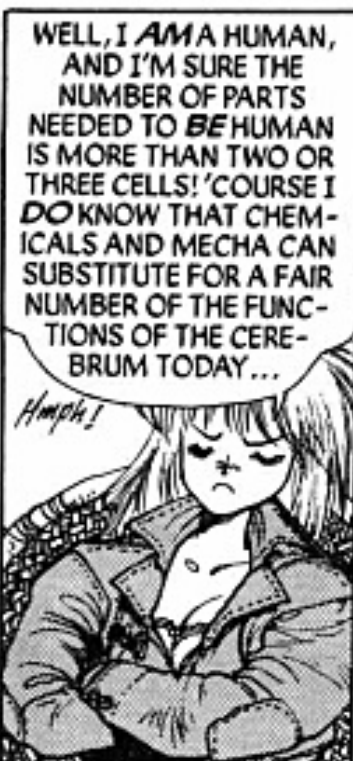


MAYBE SOMEDAY YOUR "MAKER" WILL COME...

... HAUL YOU AWAY, TAKE YOU APART, AND ANNOUNCE THE RECALL OF A DEFECTIVE PRODUCT. WHAT IF ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE "REAL YOU" IS A COUPLE OF LONELY BRAIN CELLS, HUH?



WELL, I *AM* A HUMAN, AND I'M SURE THE NUMBER OF PARTS NEEDED TO *BE* HUMAN IS MORE THAN TWO OR THREE CELLS! 'COURSE I *DO* KNOW THAT CHEMICALS AND MECHA CAN SUBSTITUTE FOR A FAIR NUMBER OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CEREBRUM TODAY...



Hek-heh-heh...



LISTEN. IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO CREATE ROBOTS THAT CLOSE TO HUMANS, THEY WOULDN'T BE ROBOTS, THEY'D BE HUMANS! THE ONLY THING DIFFERENT WOULD BE THEIR EXTERNAL APPEARANCE!

DON'T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ROBOTS!

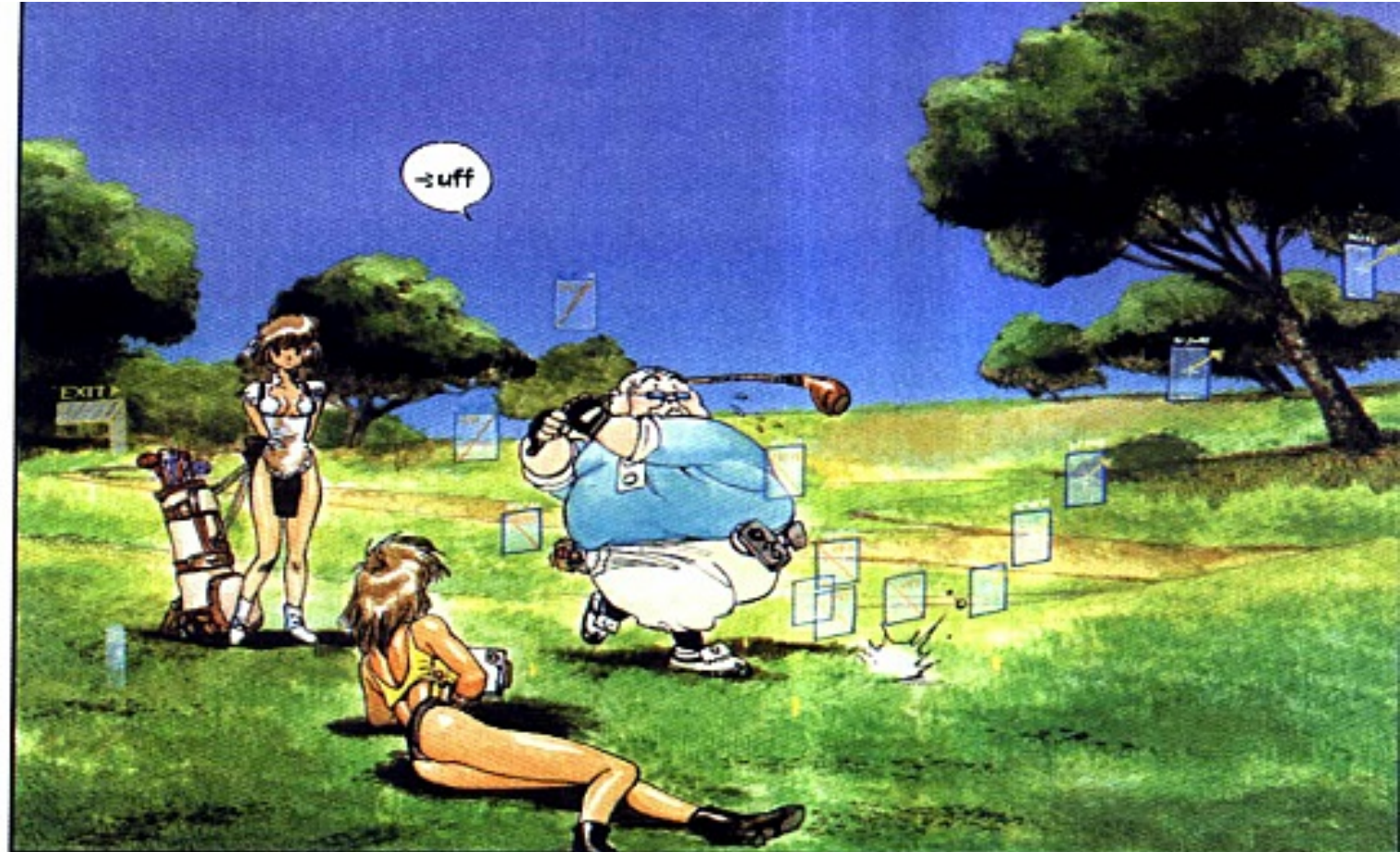


08

ROBOT
RONDO

.....
1.10.2029





DID YOU
CALL ME,
COLONEL?

UH, HUH...
I'M STARTIN'
TO SWEAT A BIT,
DEAR... Y'MIND
WIPING IT
OFF?

VREE ^{ZZ} _{ZZ}

?!

ROBOTS DON'T SMILE
BECAUSE THEY WANT
TO. THEY'RE JUST PRO-
GRAMMED TO DO SO-
LIKE HUMANS RECENTLY



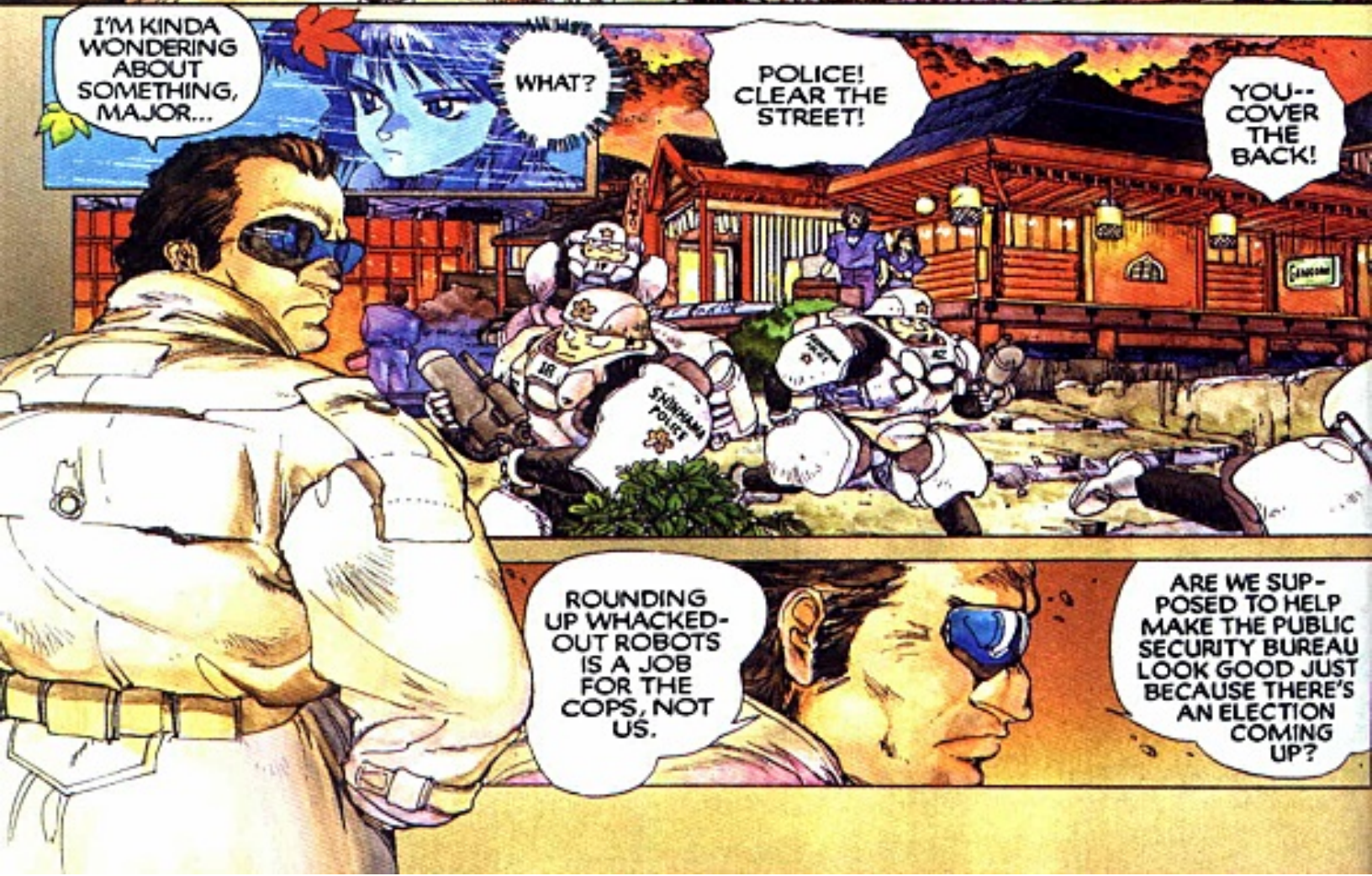
DANGER-
OUS
MOVE-
MENT
HAS
TERMINA-
TED. NOW
MODE
SHIFTING
TO NOR-
MAL.

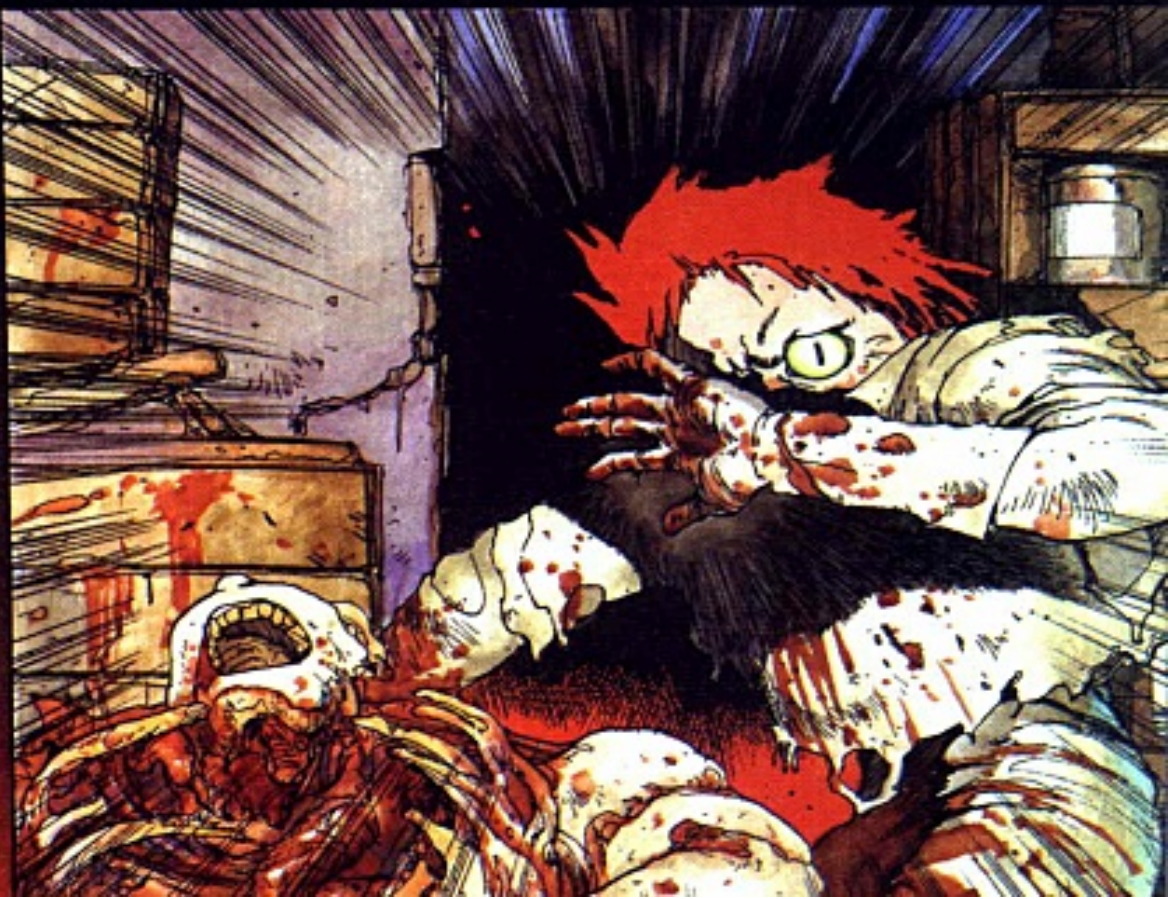
YOU
REALLY
THINK A
TOMLIAND
PROTO-
TYPE...

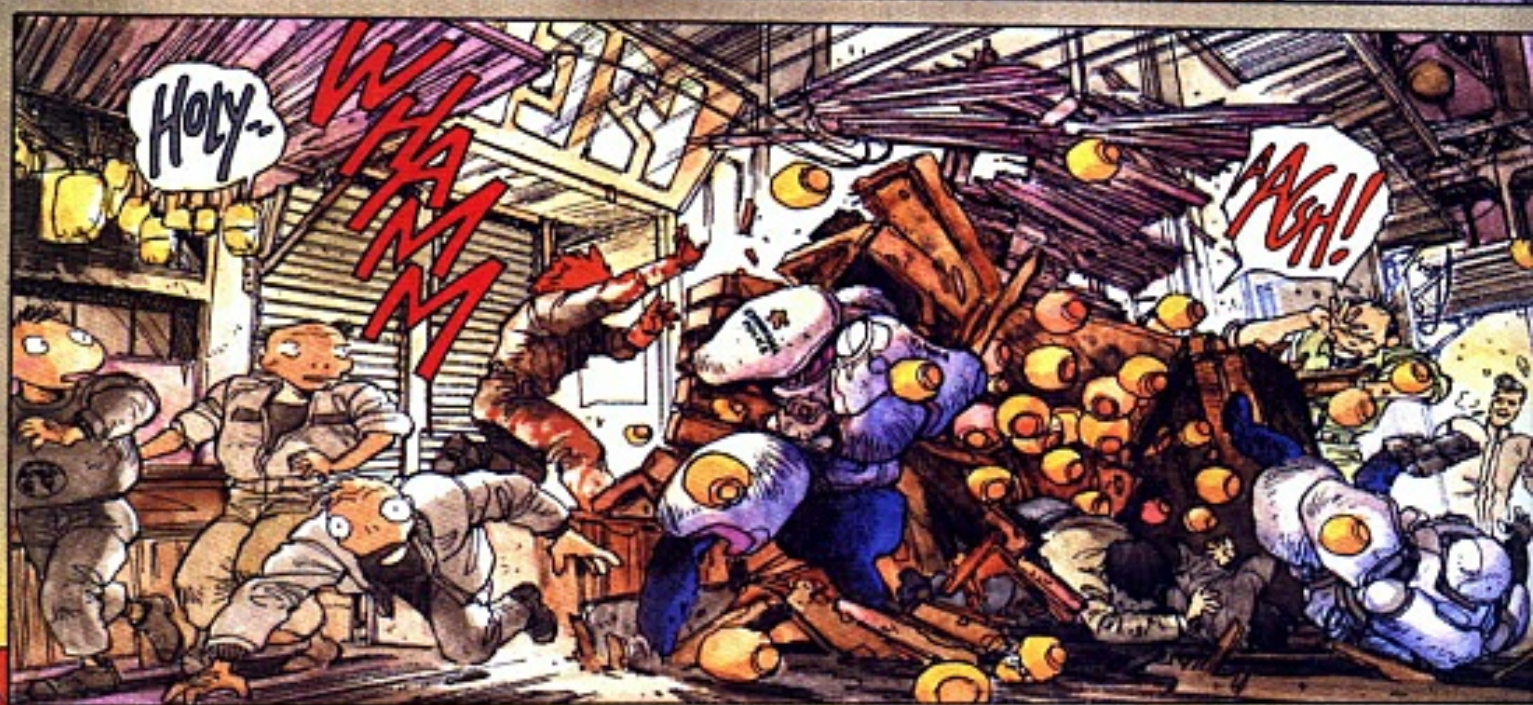
...W-WOULD
HATE
WIPING
OFF MY
SWEAT
THAT
MUCH...?

WHY,
AND
SIR?



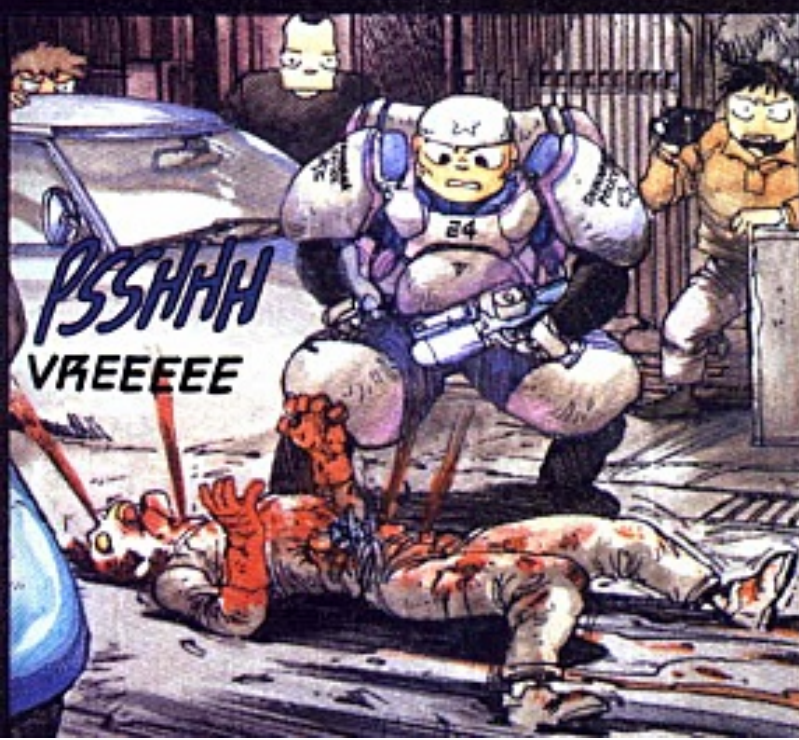
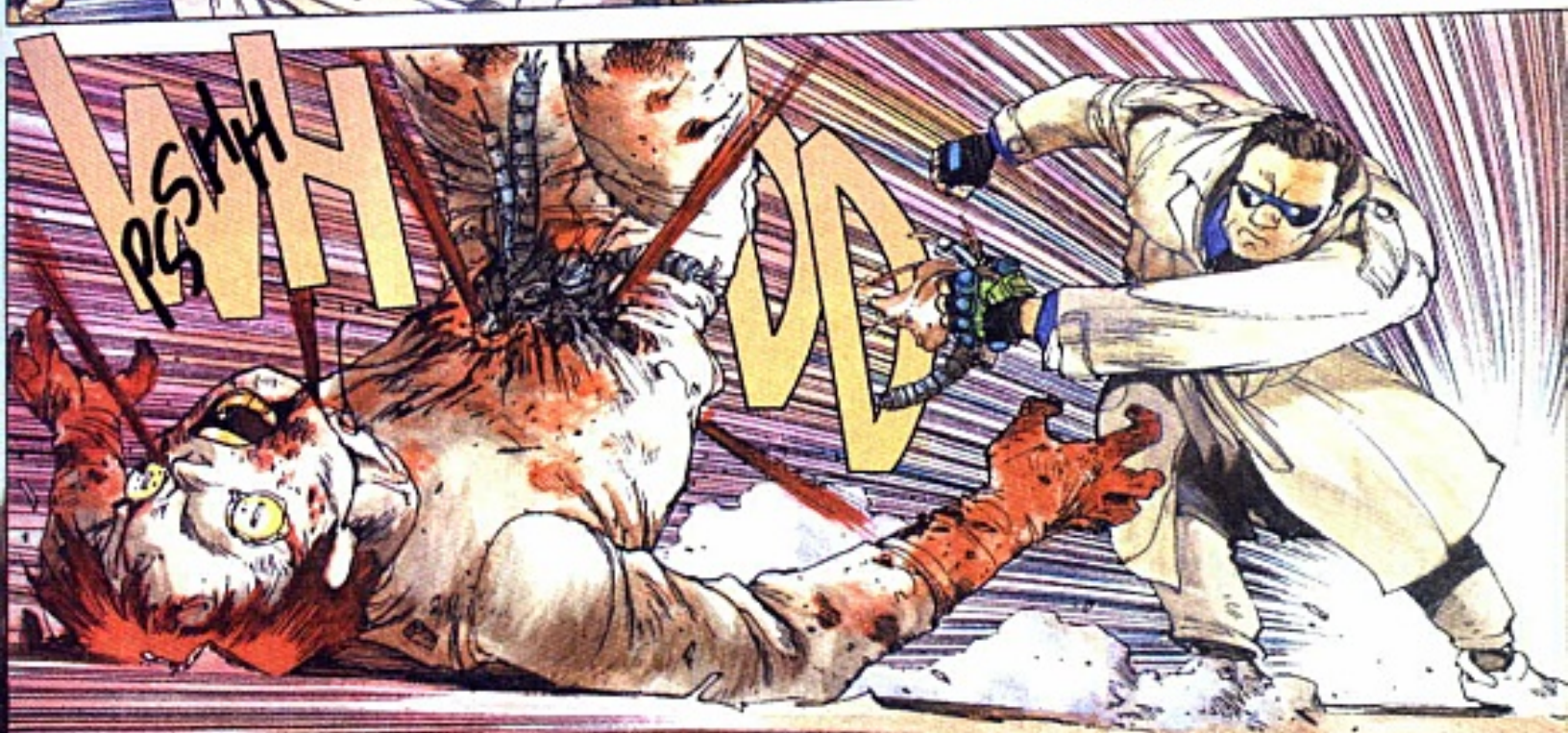






ENOUGH
SCREWIN'
AROUND,
GUYS...







SO
WHAT'S
THE
STORY?



THERE WAS
TWO OF
'EM. WE'VE
GOT THE
TOMLIAND
HERE--
SEE?

CHRAKK
CHAK

IT'S
THE
EIGHTH
CASE SO
FAR.



URK!



LISTEN, KID--I DID
ALL KINDS OF STUFF
WHEN I WAS YOUR
AGE, BUT I NEVER
TRIED TO PALM
SCUT WORK OFF ON
MY BISHOP....



HEY, THE
SENIORITY
SYSTEM'S
OUT OF
FASHION
THESE
DAYS,
BATOU...

IF THAT'S WHAT
YOU THINK,
YOU'RE ABOUT
TO LEARN
DIFFERENT,
PAL--



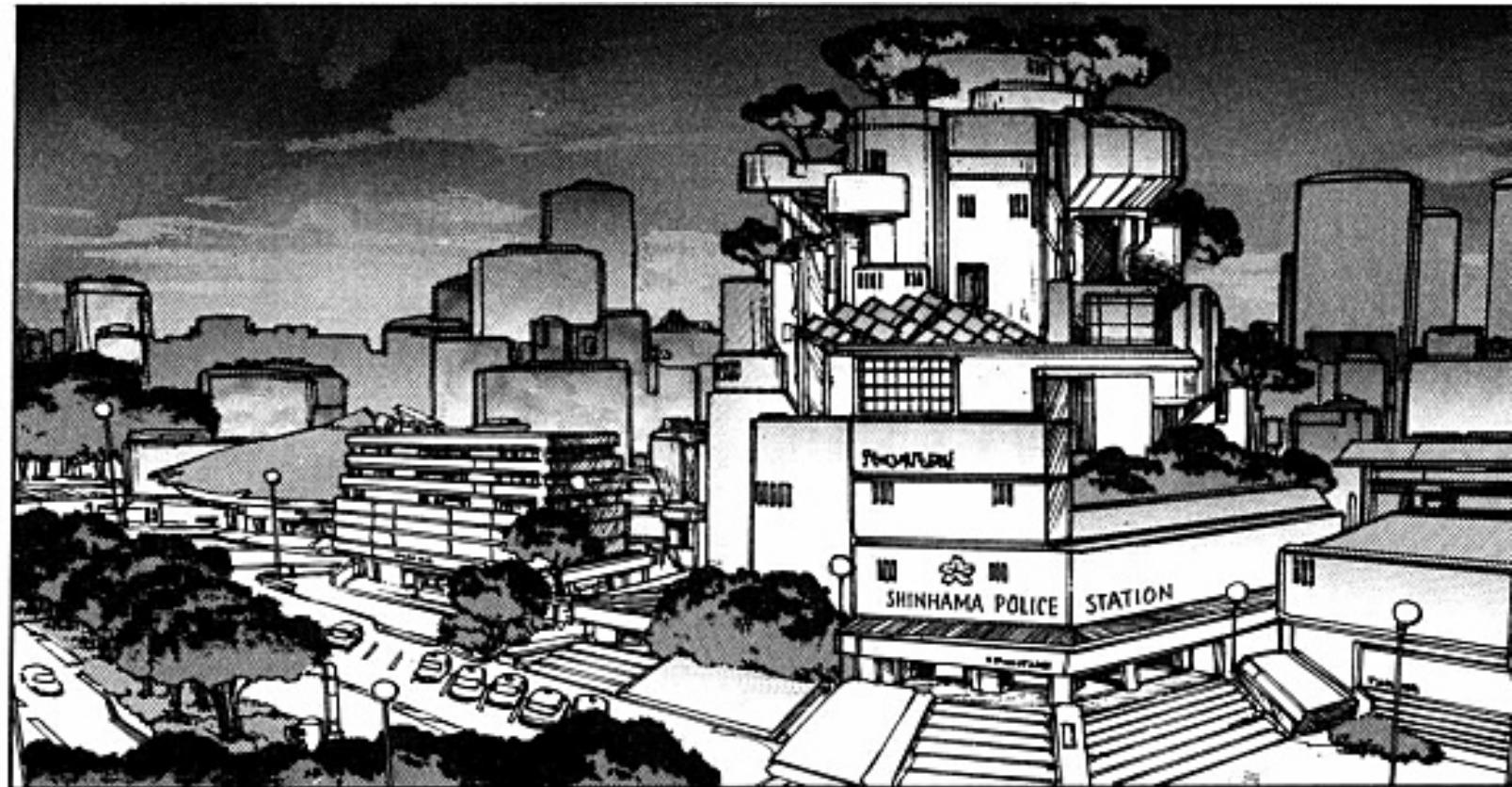
TOGUSA! GET THAT
TOMLI'S DOCU-
MENTS TOGETHER
AND FAX 'EM TO
THE CHIEF. AND
KEEP A COPY
HERE, TOO.

I'M GOING
TO THE PRE-
FECTURAL
POLICE
HEADQUAR-
TERS...

VREEE











YOU THINK
SOMEBODY
MIGHT BE
TELLING 'EM
TO BREAK
DOWN AND
ATTACK
HUMANS?

THAT
WAS TRUE
OF FOUR
CASES... WE
SOLVED 'EM
USING THE
"GRUDGE
THEORY"...



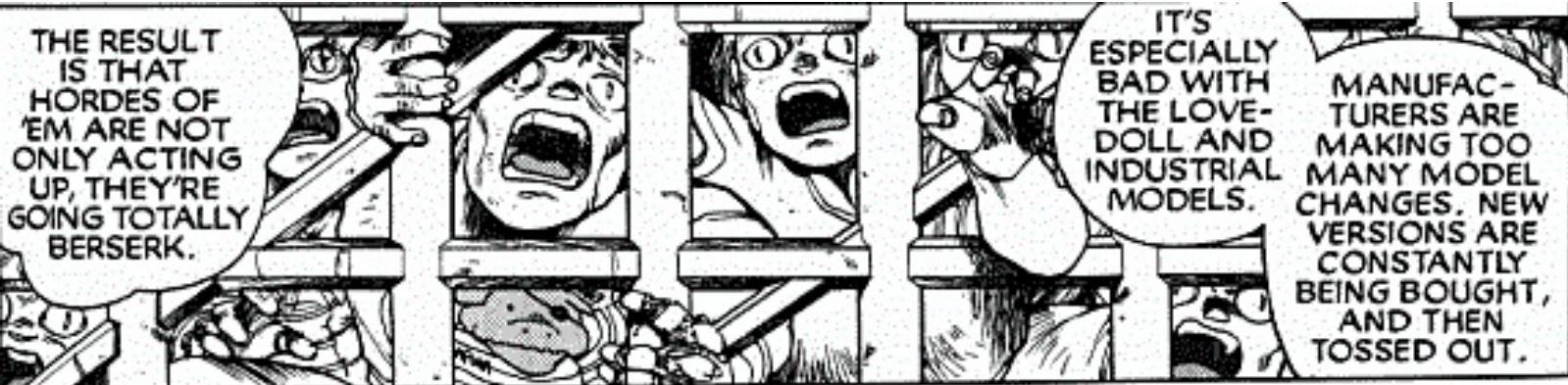
...YOU
KNOW, THE
USUAL STUFF.
CORPORATE
LIABILITY,
INCREASED
REGULATIONS,
ETC.

SO HOW DO
YOU EXPLAIN
THE CONTINUING
INCREASE IN
INCIDENTS?

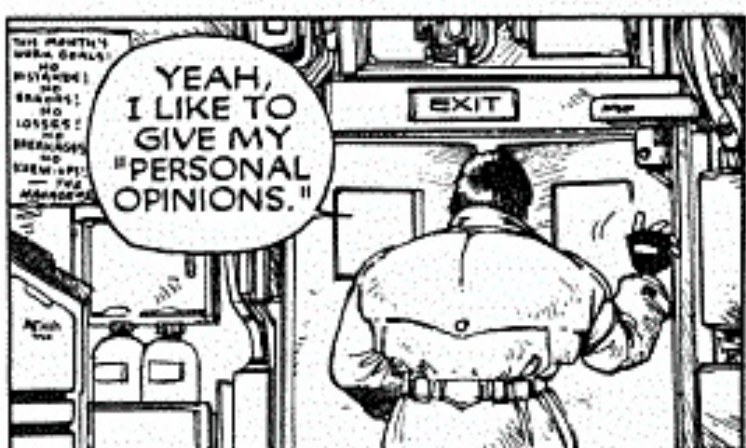


IT'S
BECAUSE
THE ROBOTS
ARE BEING
SCRAPPED...

...WHEN
THEY'RE
NOT
NEEDED
ANY-
MORE.



WOULDN'T WORK. TOO EXPENSIVE, AND CONFLICTS WITH PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE.





SO,
HOW'S
THE INVESTIGATION
GOING?



WELL,
ARA-
MAKI?



YOU DON'T
EXACTLY HAVE
A HOBBY YOU
CAN BRAG ABOUT
PUBLICLY, DO
YOU, COLONEL
TONODA...?



THE TOMLIAND
WAS A WORK OF
ART. THE OTHERS
ARE ALL TOO
MECHANICAL,
AND NO DAMN
GOOD.

EVEN THE ONE
YOU BROUGHT
WITH YOU
REEKS OF THAT
WHITE ROBOT
BLOOD,
ARAMAKI.



THERE
ARE NO
ROBOTS IN
MY UNIT,
COLONEL
TONODA...

SCARED
YOU!



OH,
YEAH?



FRANKLY,
COLONEL, WE'RE
CANCELING YOUR
PERSONAL GUARD
AND I JUST
WANTED TO
INFORM YOU
FACE TO FACE.

WHA--?!
YOU
MUST BE
KIDDING...



THE CURRENT INFORMATION DEPARTMENT.





IT WASN'T.

SO JURIS-
DICTION IN
THIS CASE'LL
SHIFT TO THE
POLICE
DEPART-
MENT?

NOPE.
WE'LL
STILL BE
ON IT.



AND
WHY'S
THAT?



BECAUSE THERE
WAS AN "SOS"
LITERALLY
WRITTEN IN
BLOOD ON THE
CYBERBRAIN
UNIT OF THE
TOMLI, THAT'S
WHY.

OF COURSE WE
DON'T KNOW IF THE
SOS REALLY WAS A
CALL FOR HELP OR
NOT, BUT COMMER-
CIAL TOMLI MODELS
DON'T HAVE IT.
WE'VE ONLY FOUND
IT ON THE EIGHT
PROTOTYPES
WE HAD TO
NEUTRALIZE.



SO THAT'S
WHY YOU PUT
THE COLONEL
UNDER A
TWENTY-FOUR-
HOUR WATCH,
AND BUGGED
HIS PLACE, TOO.



SO, THE
PERSON WE'RE
LOOKING FOR
MADE EIGHT
TOMLIS GO
BERSERK TO
SEND AN SOS
TO THE
POLICE...



THERE'S BEEN A GENERAL INCREASE IN ROBOT ACCIDENTS RECENTLY, SO THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW ABOUT THE SOS WOULD BE THE POLICE AND THE PERSON WHO PLANTED IT.

DON'T FORGET THE INSPECTORS...



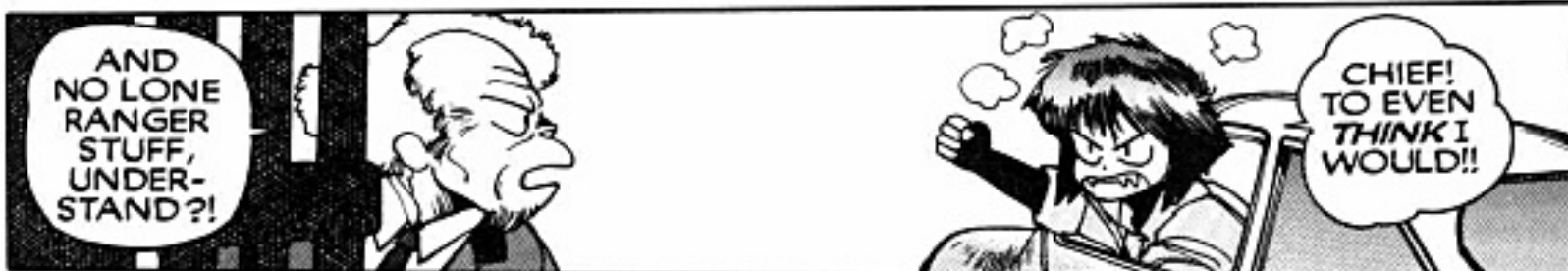
THE SHIPPING INSPECTOR AT HANKA PRECISION INSTRUMENTS-- THE TOMILAND SUBCONTRACTOR-- MUST'VE KNOWN ABOUT THE SOS MARK, TOO....



I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO GUARDING THE ANTI-EC ECONOMIC CABINET MEETING. I'LL BE USING ISHIKAWA, BOMA, AND PAZ...

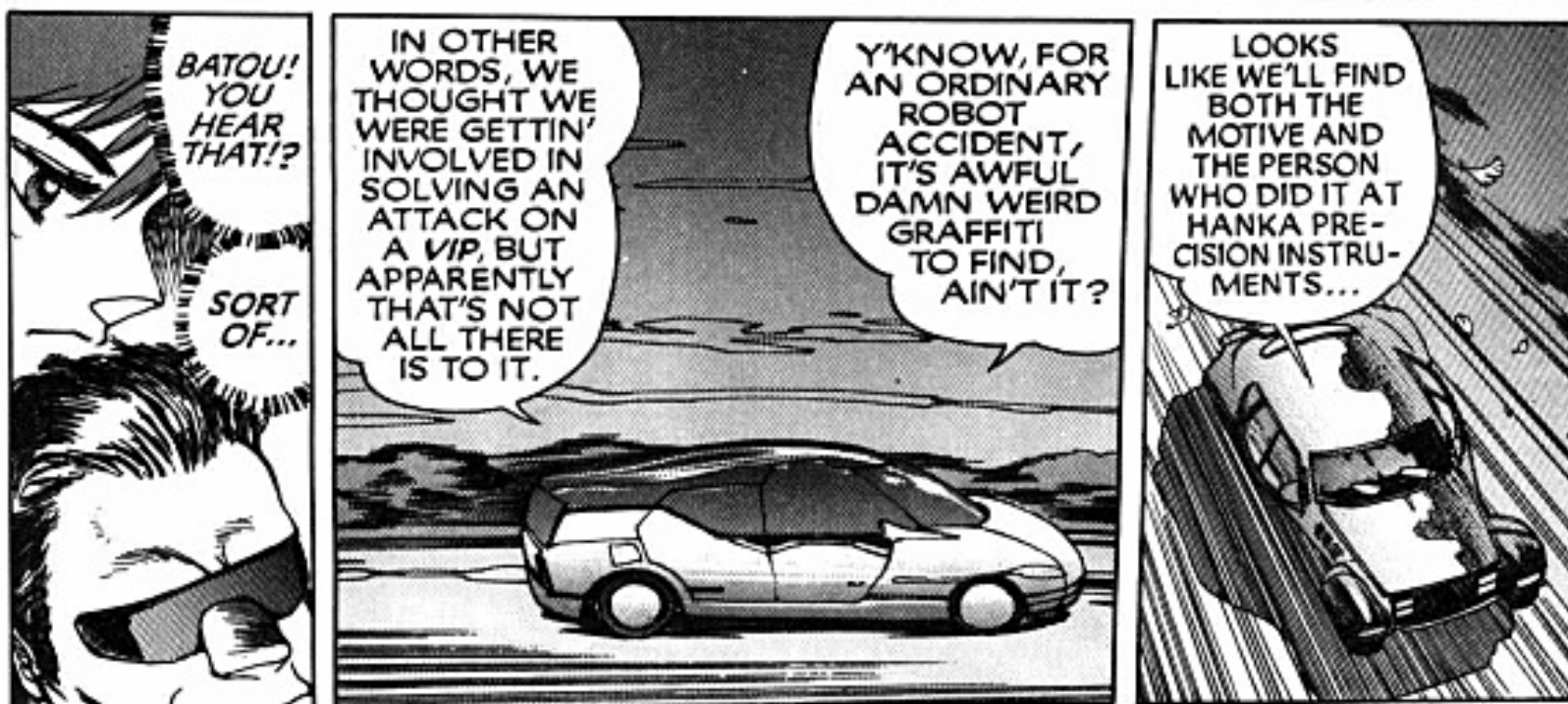
SAITO'S IN PHNOM PENH. I WANT YOU, TOGUSA, AND BATOU TO HANDLE THIS. IF ANYTHING BREAKS, LET ME KNOW!

YES, SAH!



AND NO LONE RANGER STUFF, UNDERSTAND?!

CHIEF! TO EVEN THINK I WOULD!!



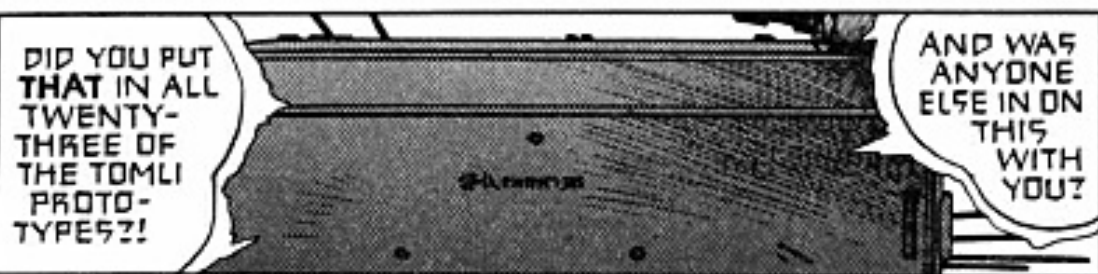
BATOU! YOU HEAR THAT!?

SORT OF...

IN OTHER WORDS, WE THOUGHT WE WERE GETTIN' INVOLVED IN SOLVING AN ATTACK ON A VIP, BUT APPARENTLY THAT'S NOT ALL THERE IS TO IT.

Y'KNOW, FOR AN ORDINARY ROBOT ACCIDENT, IT'S AWFUL DAMN WEIRD GRAFFITI TO FIND, AIN'T IT?

LOOKS LIKE WE'LL FIND BOTH THE MOTIVE AND THE PERSON WHO DID IT AT HANKA PRECISION INSTRUMENTS...





WE SENT
PROTOTYPE TOMLIS TO
TWENTY-THREE VIPs.
OF THEM, SEVEN WENT
BERSERK AND WERE
LISTED BY THE POLICE
AS HAVING
ACCIDENTALLY
MALFUNCTIONED.

WE WERE
ABLE TO
RECALL FOUR-
TEEN, BUT WE
STILL CAN'T
CONTACT TWO OF
THE OWNERS.

IF THE POLICE HEAVY
ARMOR UNITS HAD
DESTROYED THE
CYBERBRAIN CASE,
THERE WOULD
HAVE BEEN NO
PROBLEM.

BUT WE DON'T
WANT THE SOFT-
WARE IN THEM
TO BE ANALYZED
WHILE IT'S
STILL FUNC-
TIONAL...

I... SET IT UP...
SO ALL TWENTY-
THREE WOULD...
GO BERSERK...
THEN WROTE...

...THE SOS
ON THE
CYBERBRAIN...
I WAS ASKED BY
LINK AND ADAM
IN STAGE FOUR...
IN EXCHANGE...
FOR... TWO
NIGHTS WITH
THEM...

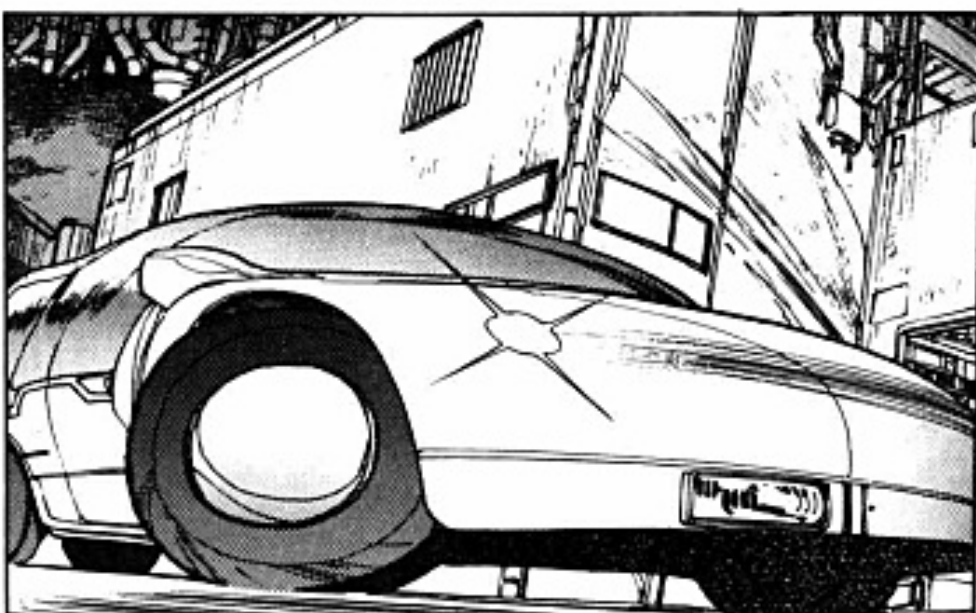
WELL,
DOCTOR?
IS THE
SERUM
WORKING?

YESSIR.
WITH FULL
EFFECT.

WELL, I'VE
LEARNED ALL I
NEED TO KNOW.
ONE OF OUR
CLIENTS WANTS A
CULPRIT, SO
GIVE THEM
KUBONUMA...

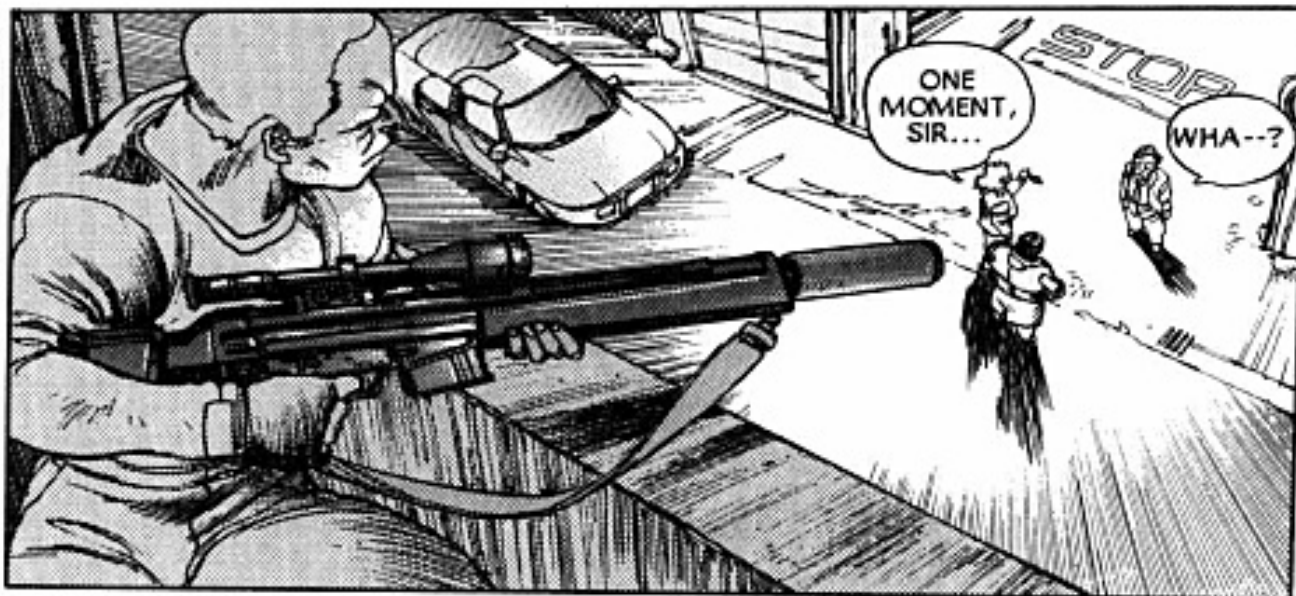
YESSIR.

BUT... BUT IF YOU
PERSONALLY...
TOOK
RESPONSIBILITY...
WORKERS COULD
KEEP THEIR
JOBS...



HEY...
HIS BADGE
SAYS HE'S A
"SHIPPING
INSPECTOR"...

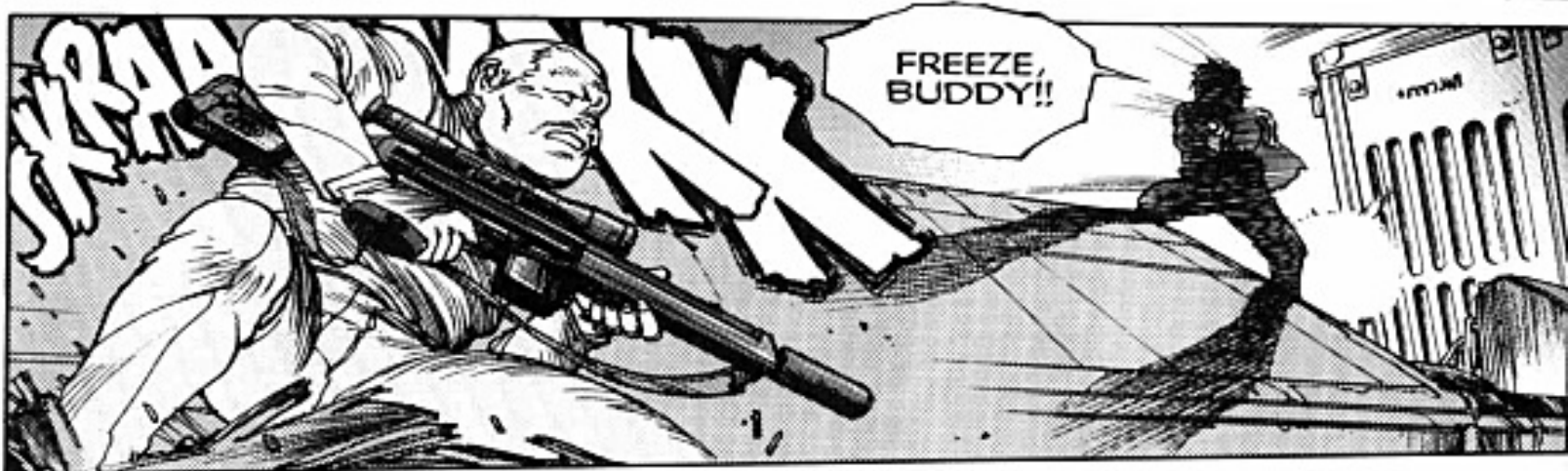
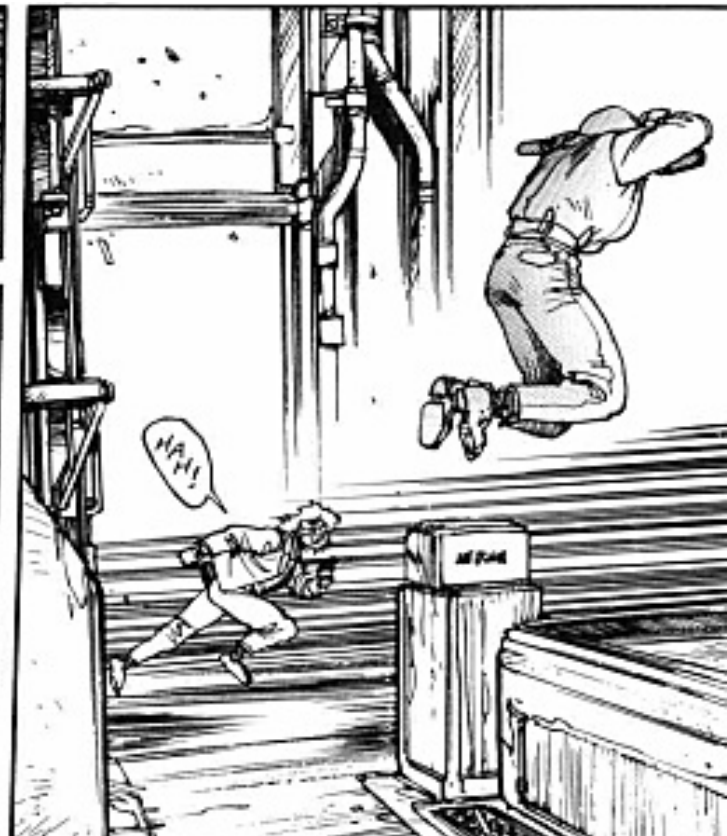
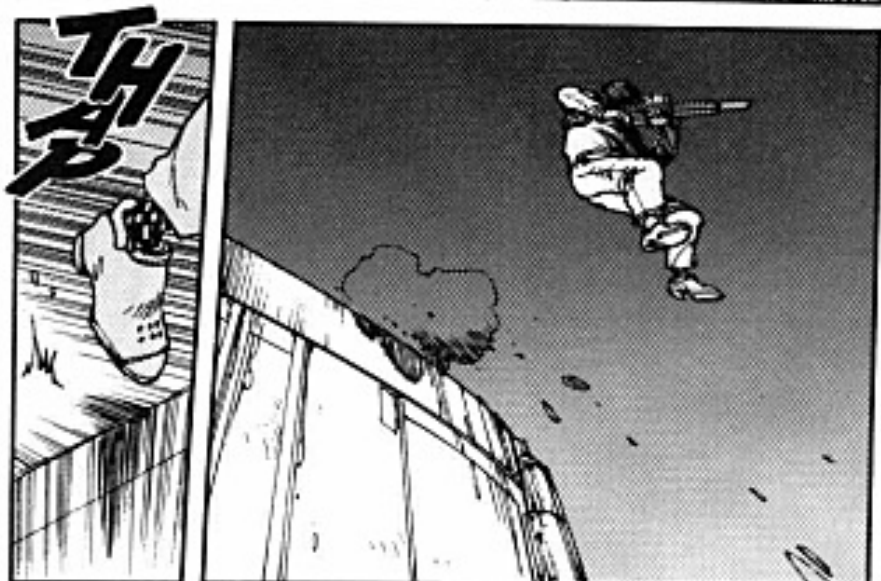
LOOKS
LIKE HE
COULDN'T
INSPECT HIS
OWN DICK
RIGHT
NOW...

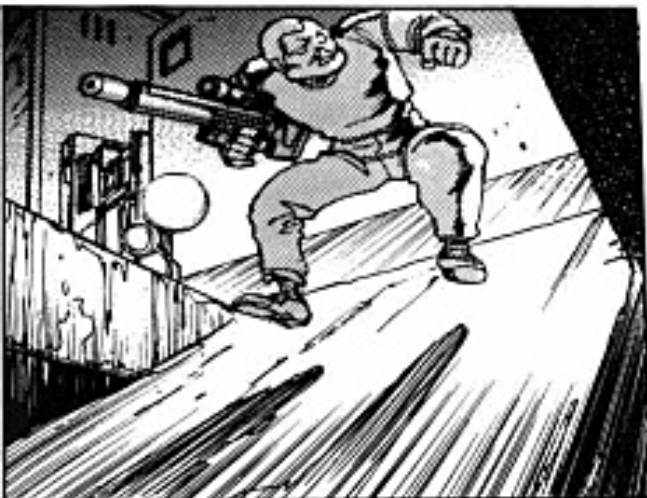
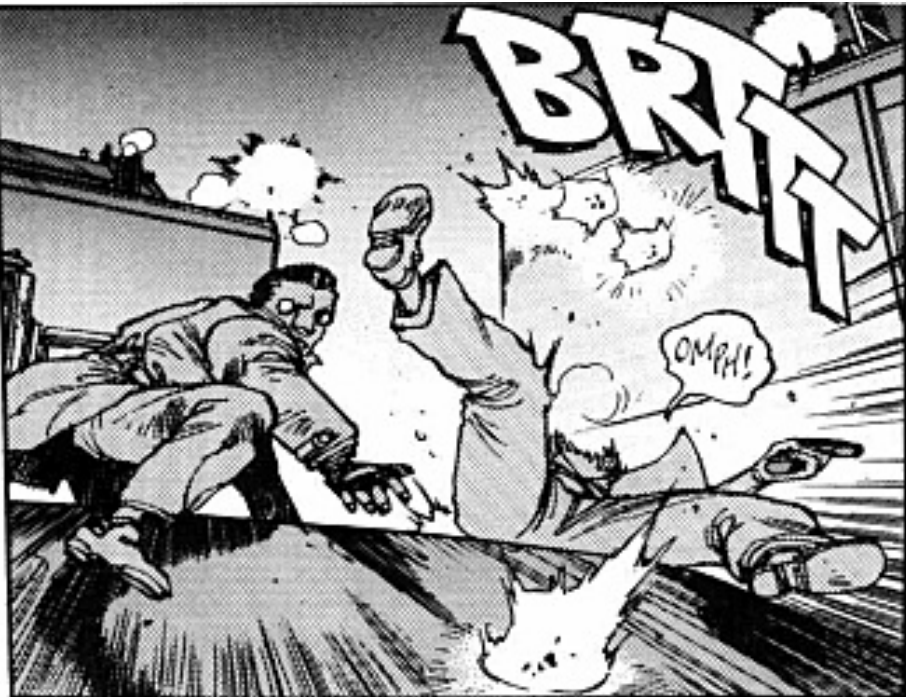


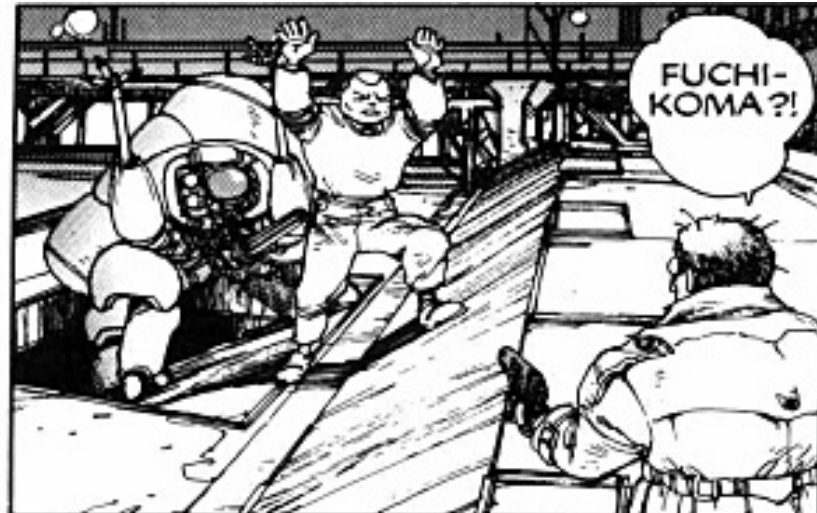
UH...





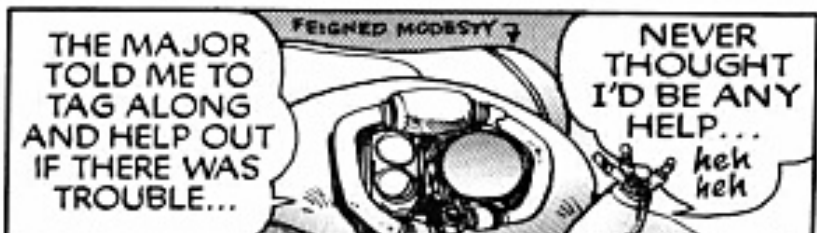






FUCHI-KOMA?!

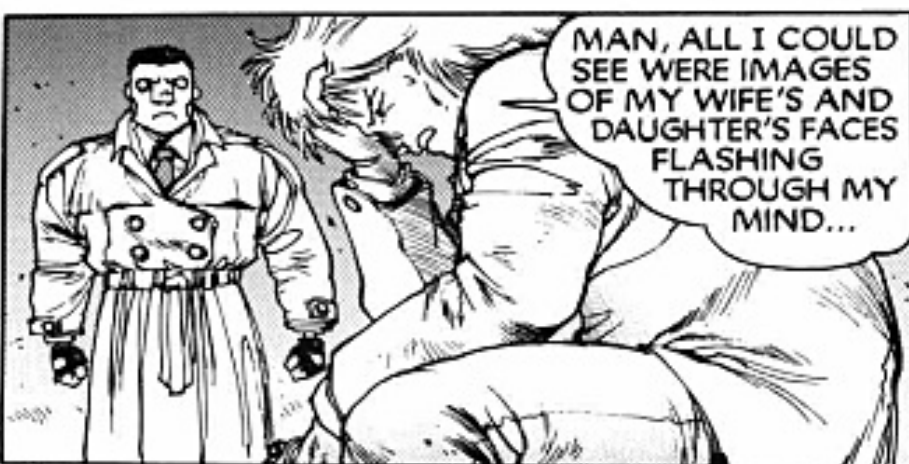
WELL, GOOD WORK. NOW CHECK OUR PERIMETER-- THIS GUY MAY HAVE SOME PALS AROUND. START WITH PHONE BOOTHS AND CARS IN THE AREA.



THE MAJOR TOLD ME TO TAG ALONG AND HELP OUT IF THERE WAS TROUBLE...

FEIGNED MODesty

NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE ANY HELP...
heh heh

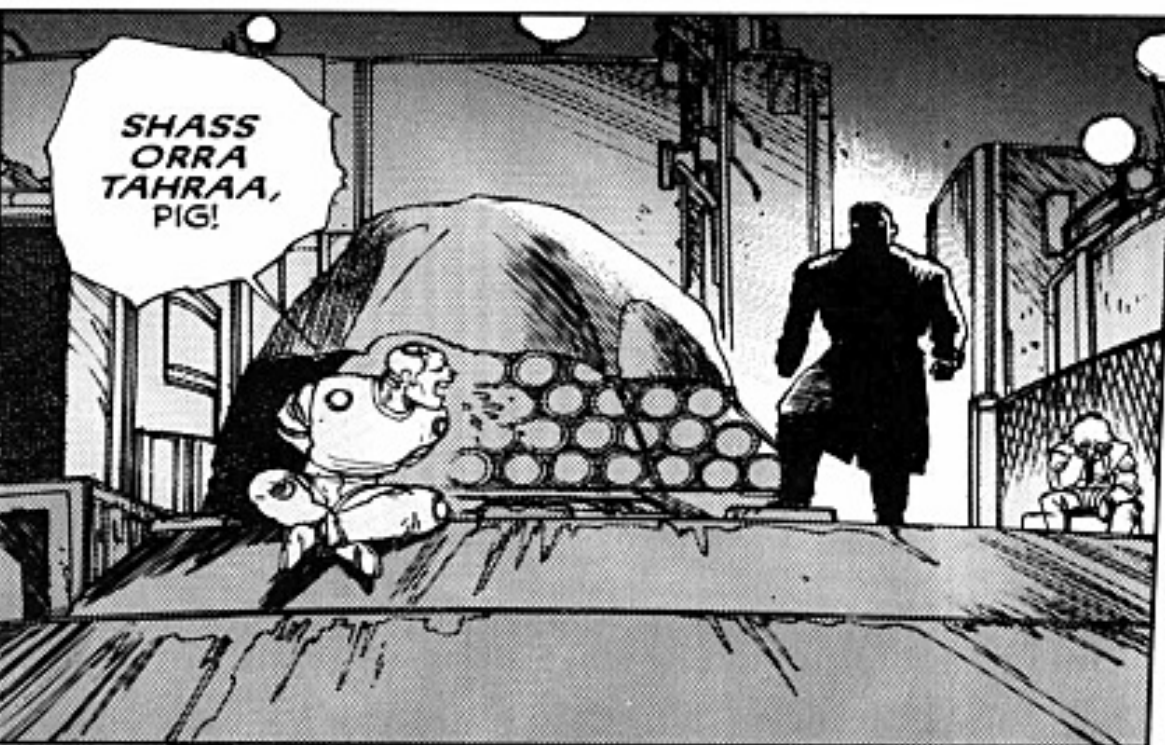


MAN, ALL I COULD SEE WERE IMAGES OF MY WIFE'S AND DAUGHTER'S FACES FLASHING THROUGH MY MIND...



NOT YER WIFE AND KID, PAL.

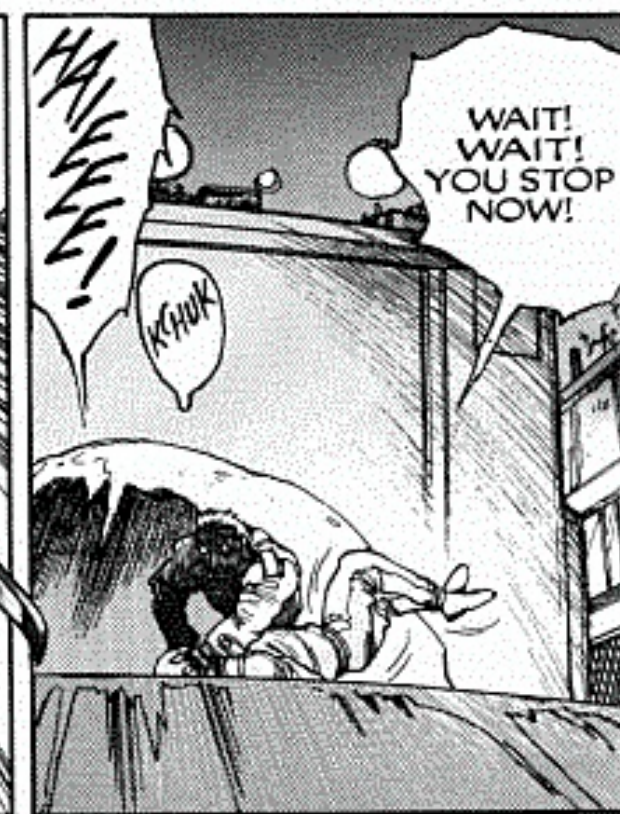
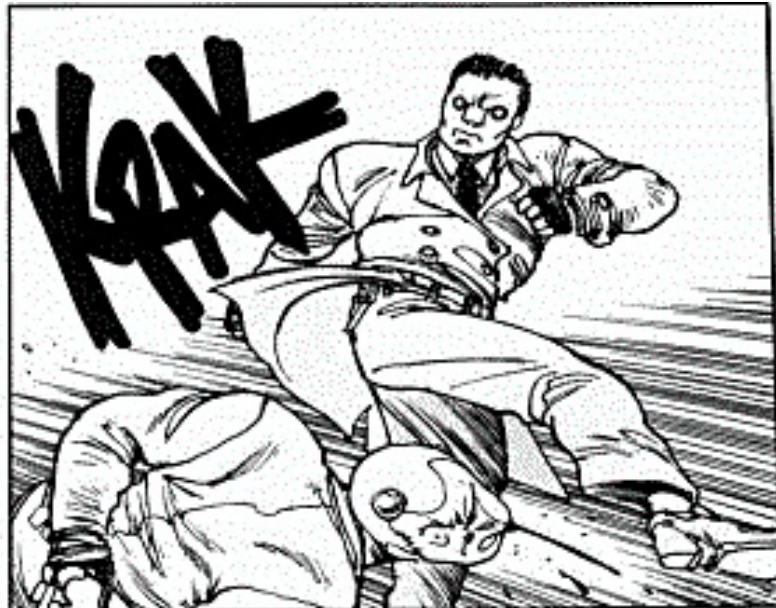
THOSE WERE THE GODDESSES OF DEATH.

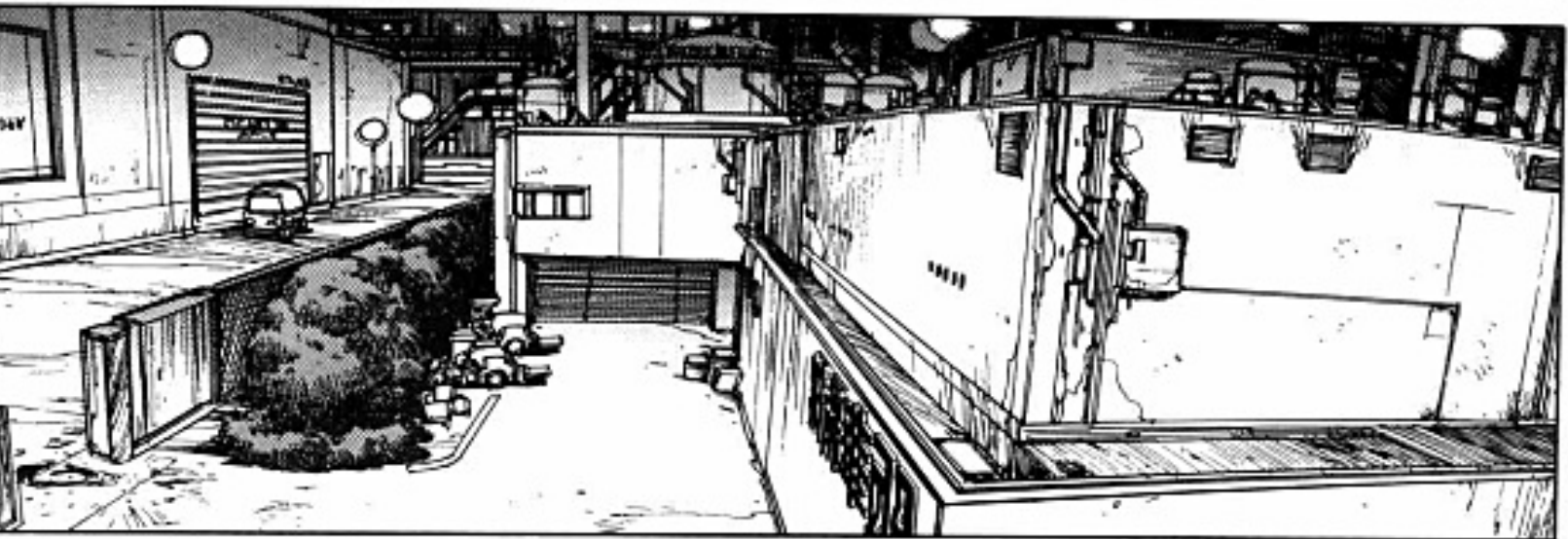


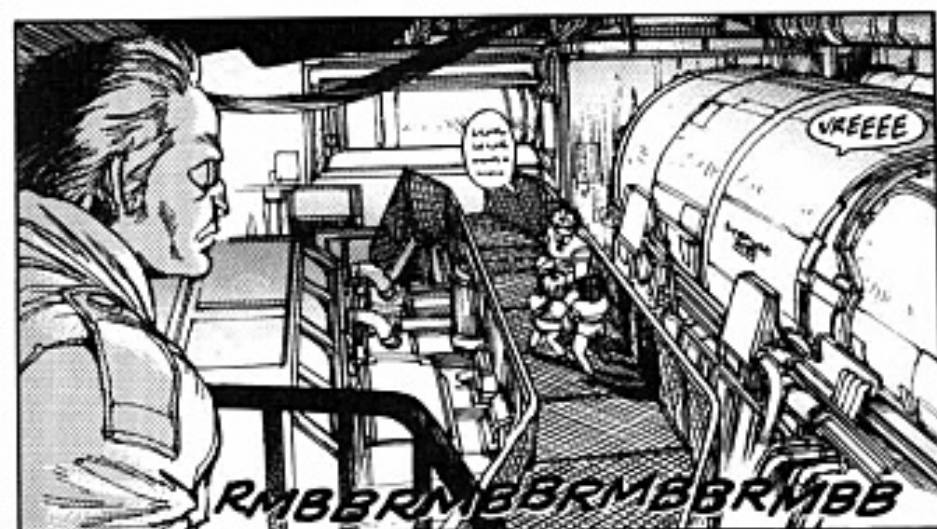
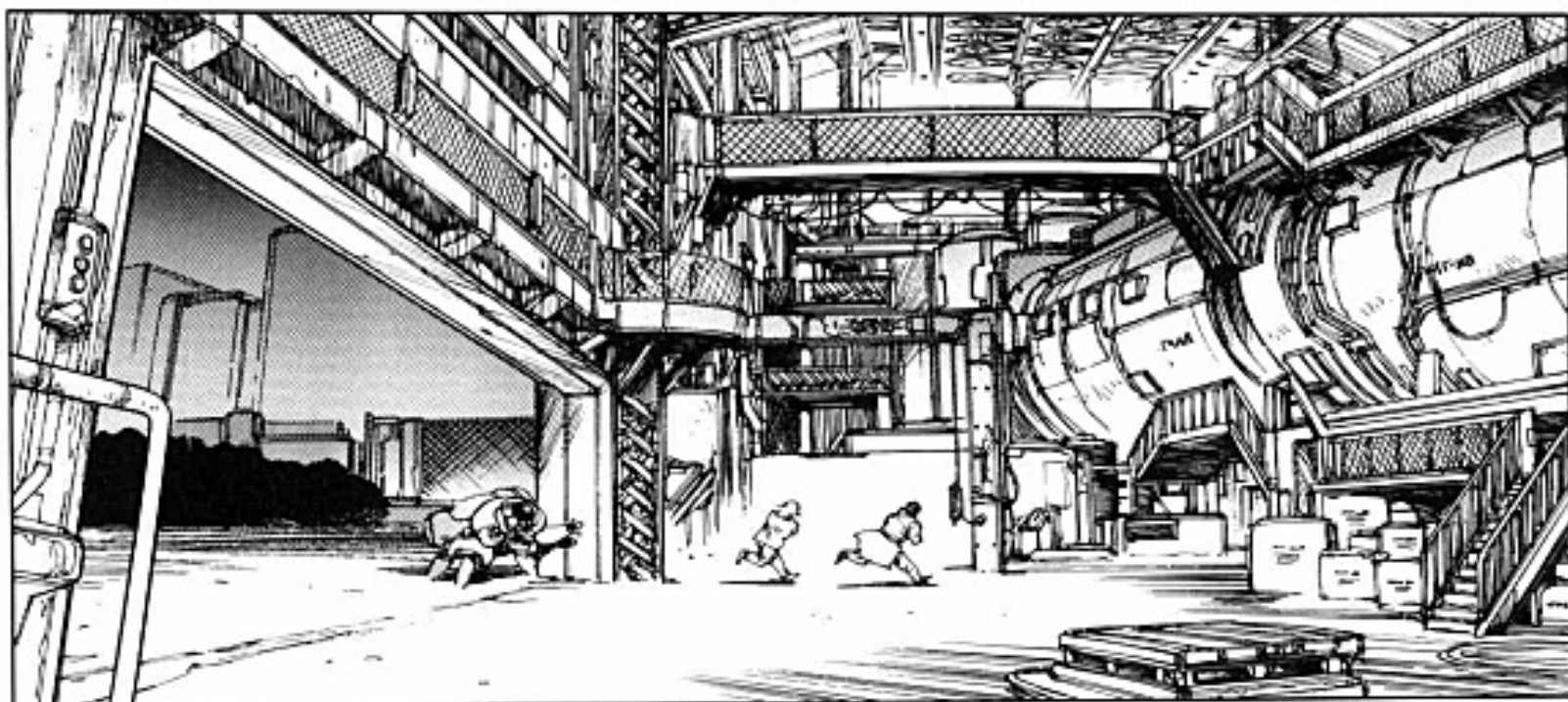
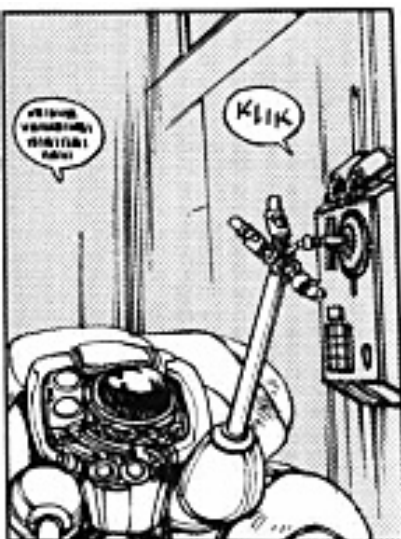
SHASS ORRA TAHRAA, PIG!



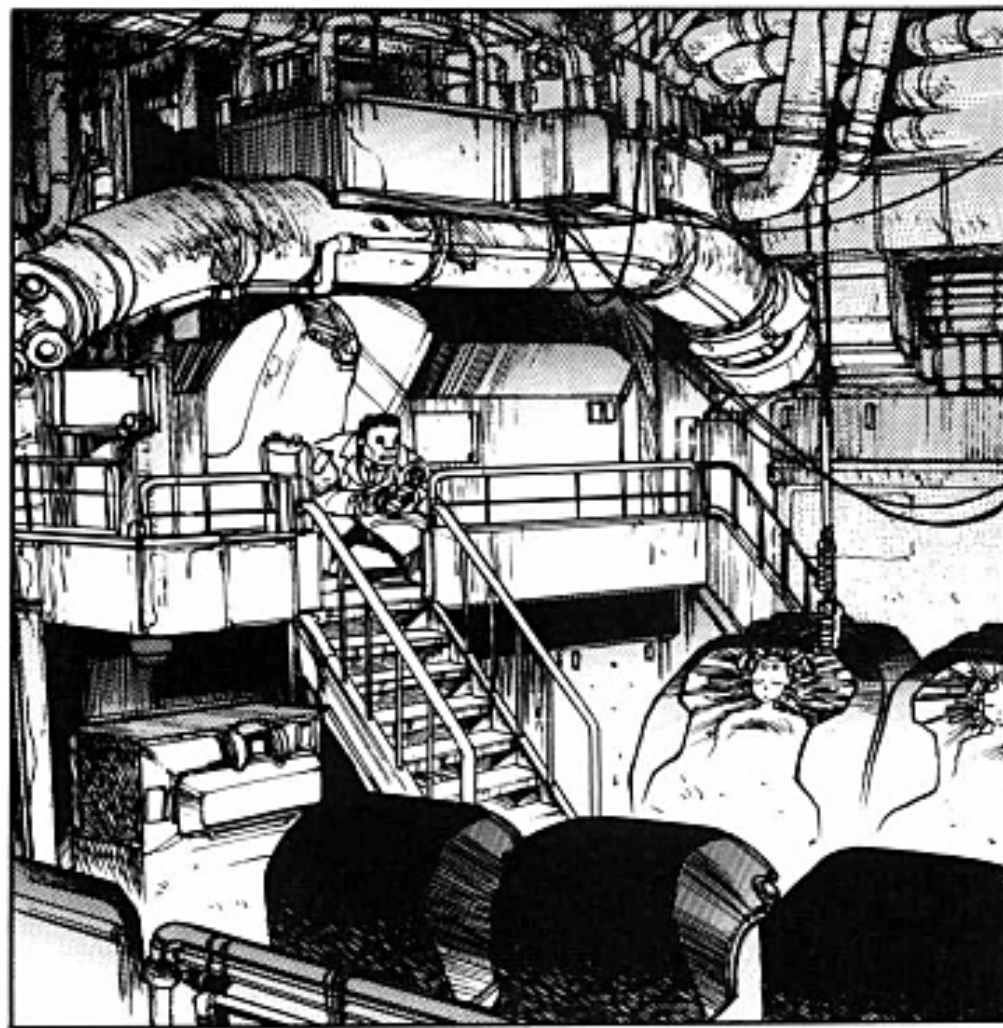
WHEN ME GET OUTTA PRISON, ME GONNA KILL YOU! JUST WAIT, PIG-MAN!



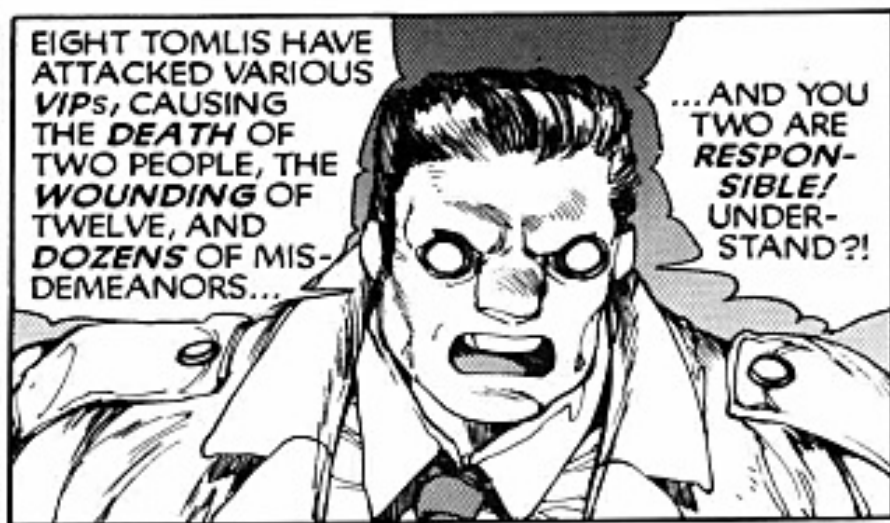










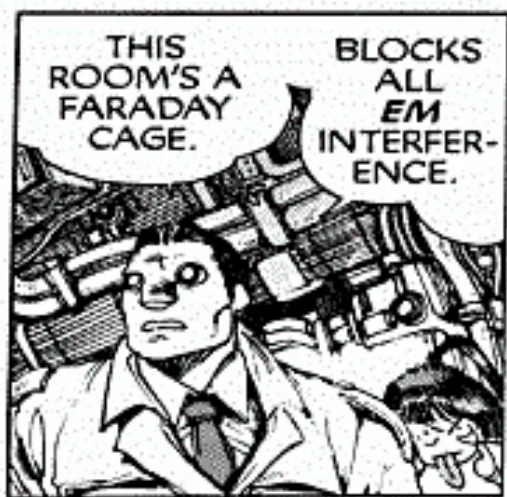




WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, TOGUSA?



YOU DIDN'T RESPOND TO MY CALLS, SO I RAN OVER HERE, EXPECTING TO FIND A STIFF...

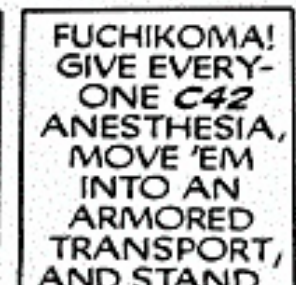


THIS ROOM'S A FARADAY CAGE.

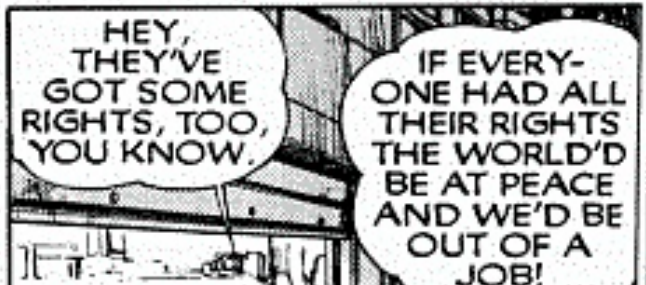
BLOCKS ALL EM INTERFERENCE.



VERY FASCINATING, BUT THE COMPANY PRESIDENT JUST SKIPPED IN A CAR!



FUCHIKOMA! GIVE EVERYONE C42 ANESTHESIA, MOVE 'EM INTO AN ARMORED TRANSPORT, AND STAND BY!

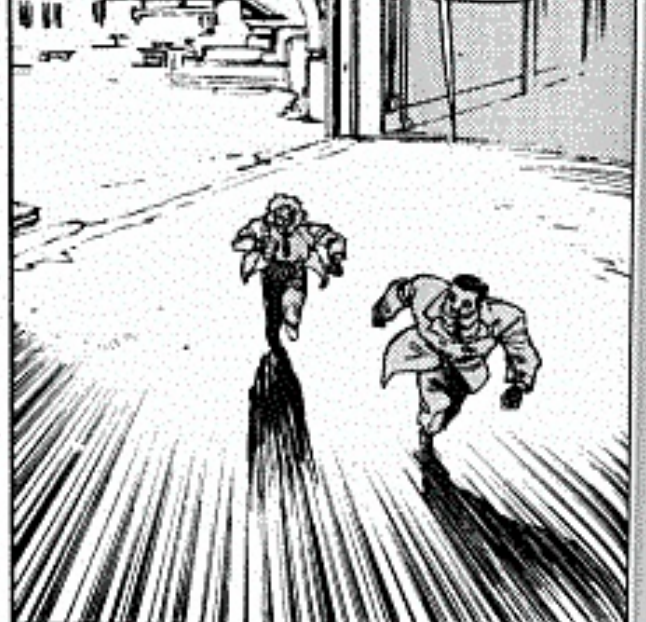


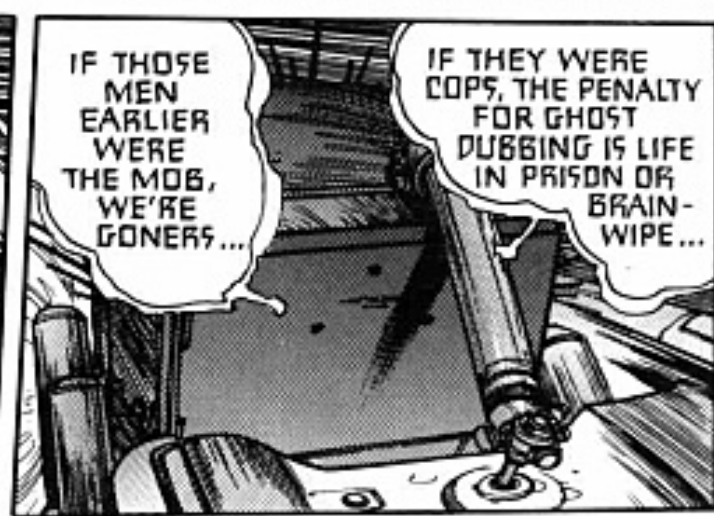
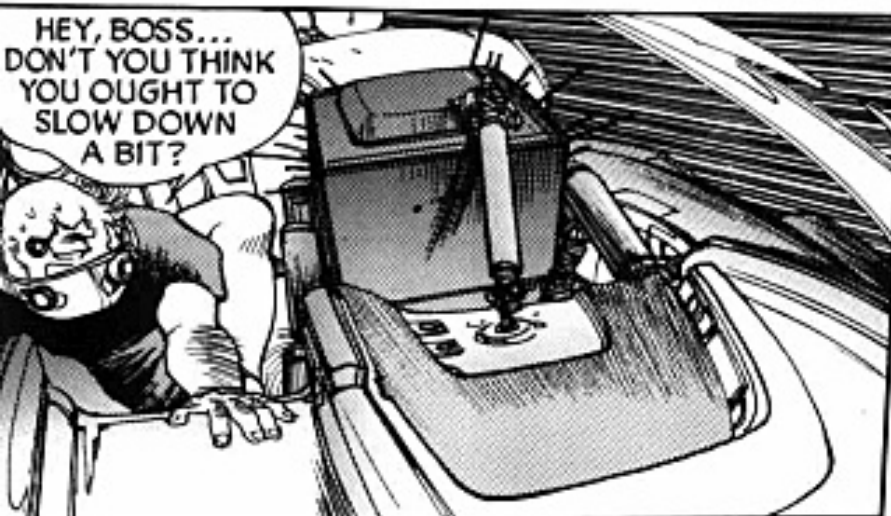
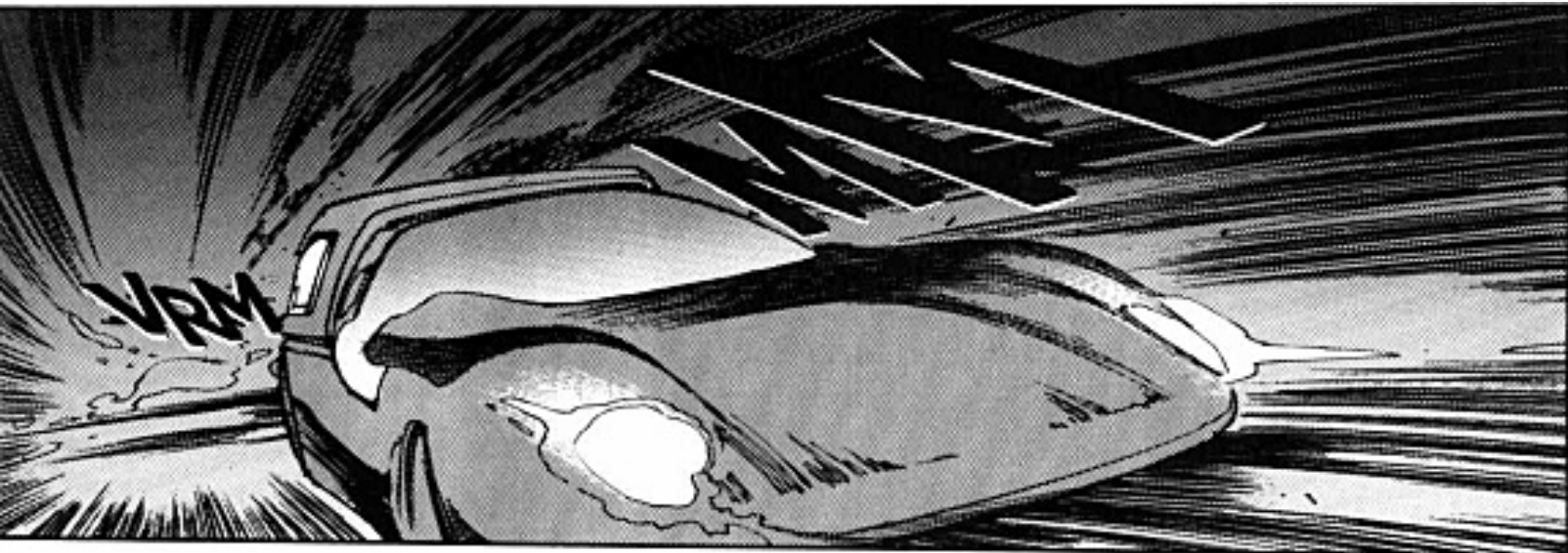
HEY, THEY'VE GOT SOME RIGHTS, TOO, YOU KNOW.

IF EVERYONE HAD ALL THEIR RIGHTS THE WORLD'D BE AT PEACE AND WE'D BE OUT OF A JOB!



WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME? LET'S GO!







THEY'RE
HEADING
FOR THE
PORT...

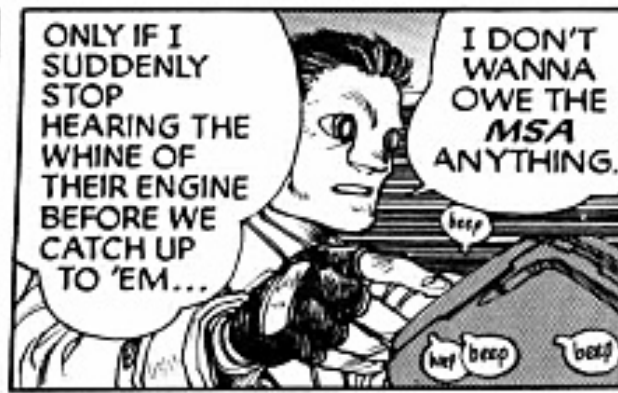
GHOST DUBBING'S
LIFE OR BRAINWIPE,
SO THEY'LL TRY
TO FLEE THE
COUNTRY...



SMUGGLING
KIDS, INVOLVE-
MENT WITH
DRUGS--HELL,
I'D HEAD FOR
THE HIGH SEAS,
TOO.



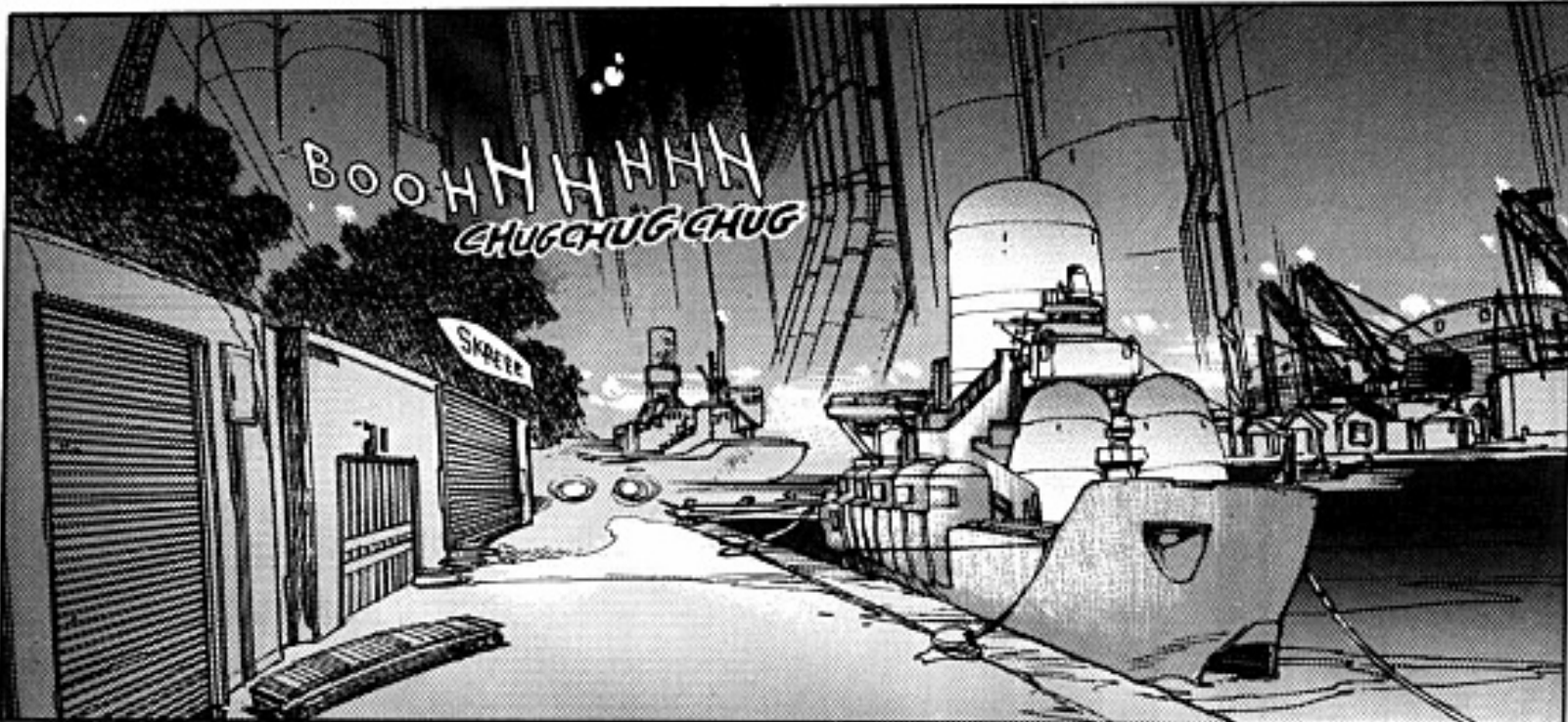
LET'S
GET THE
MARITIME
SAFETY
AGENCY
TO SEAL
OFF THE
PORT...



ONLY IF I
SUDDENLY
STOP
HEARING THE
WHINE OF
THEIR ENGINE
BEFORE WE
CATCH UP
TO 'EM...

I DON'T
WANNA
OWE THE
MSA
ANYTHING.

beep
beep
beep



BOOOHHHHHH
CHUGCHUG CHUG



BOSS!
WHY'RE YOU
SLOWING
DOWN?

START
LOOKING
FOR IT,
DOCTOR!

VRMMBBB

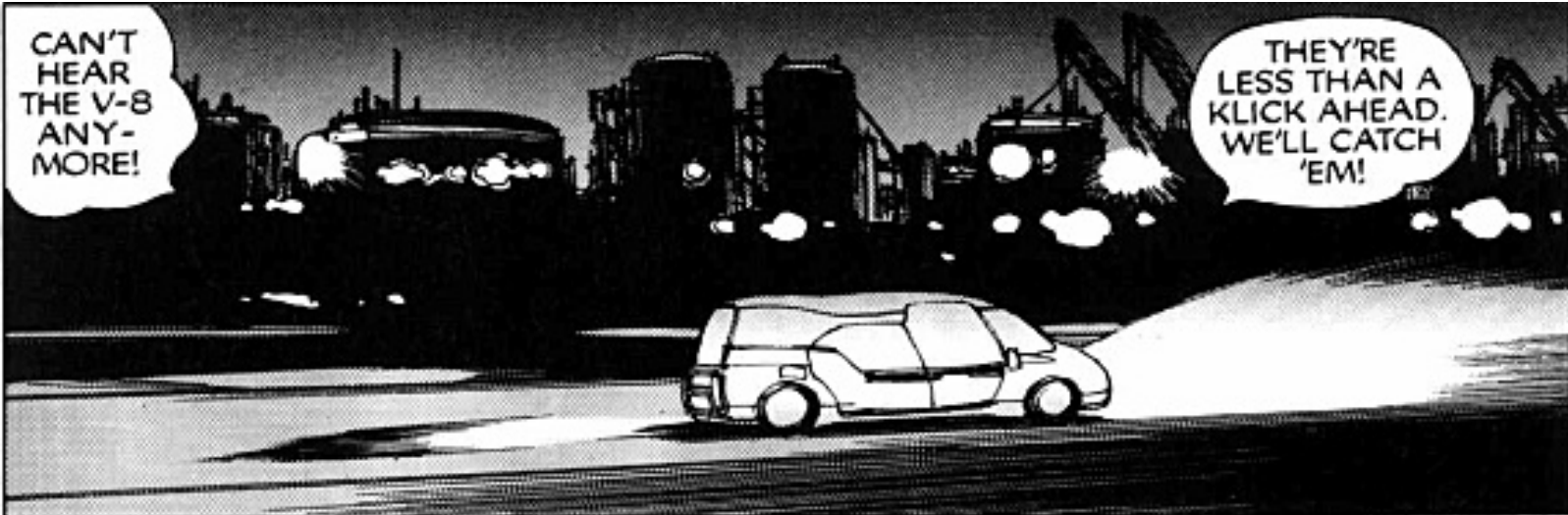
HANG



GOT A
DATABASE HIT!
THE COMPANY
SHIP'S REGIS-
TERED AS
BERTHED AT
PIER 92!

HAH!
THOUGHT
SO!

beep



CAN'T HEAR THE V-8 ANY-MORE!

THEY'RE LESS THAN A KLIKK AHEAD. WE'LL CATCH 'EM!



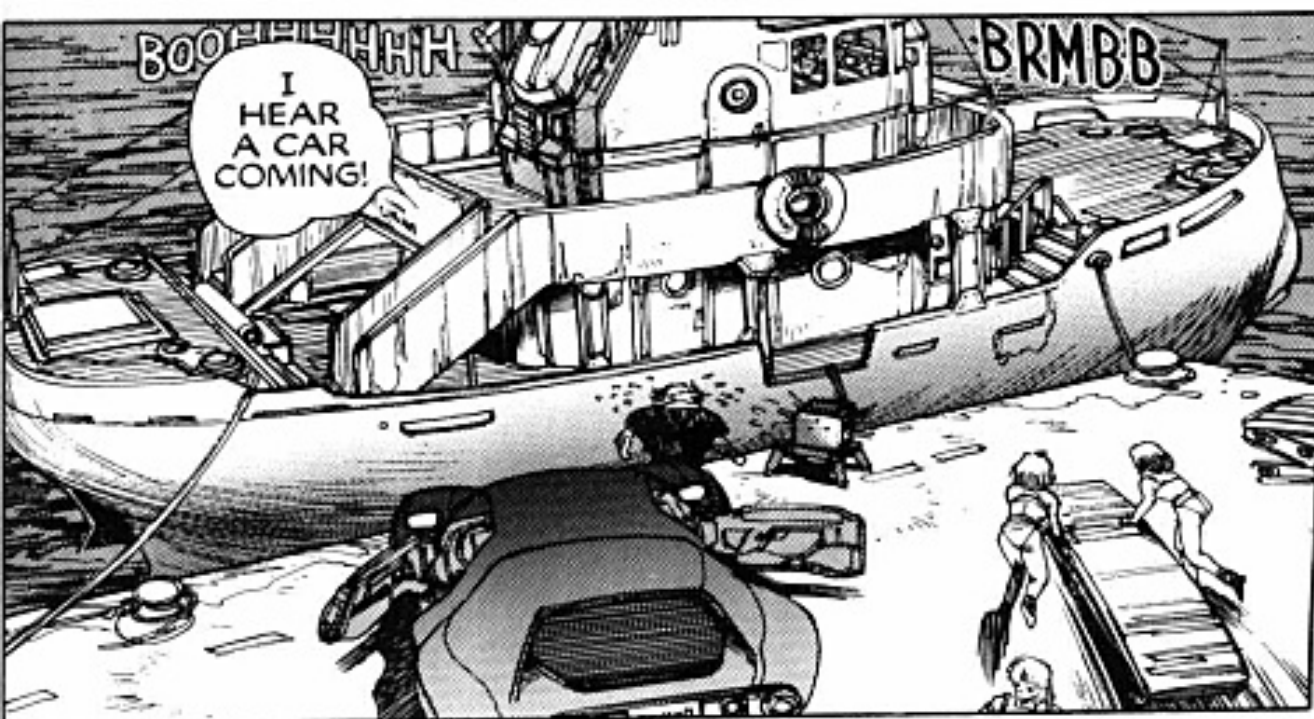
GIVEN THE SPEED THEY'RE DRIVING AT AND THE WAY THE ENGINE IS LABORING, I'D SAY THEY'VE GOT SEVERAL ROBOTS WITH 'EM.

PUT ON YOUR BUZZ-KNUCKS!



I DON'T LIKE THE SHOCK THIS PAIR GIVES OFF...

MAYBE SWEET MAYUMI IN ORDNANCE DON'T LIKE YOU ANY-MORE...



I HEAR A CAR COMING!

BOOMBB



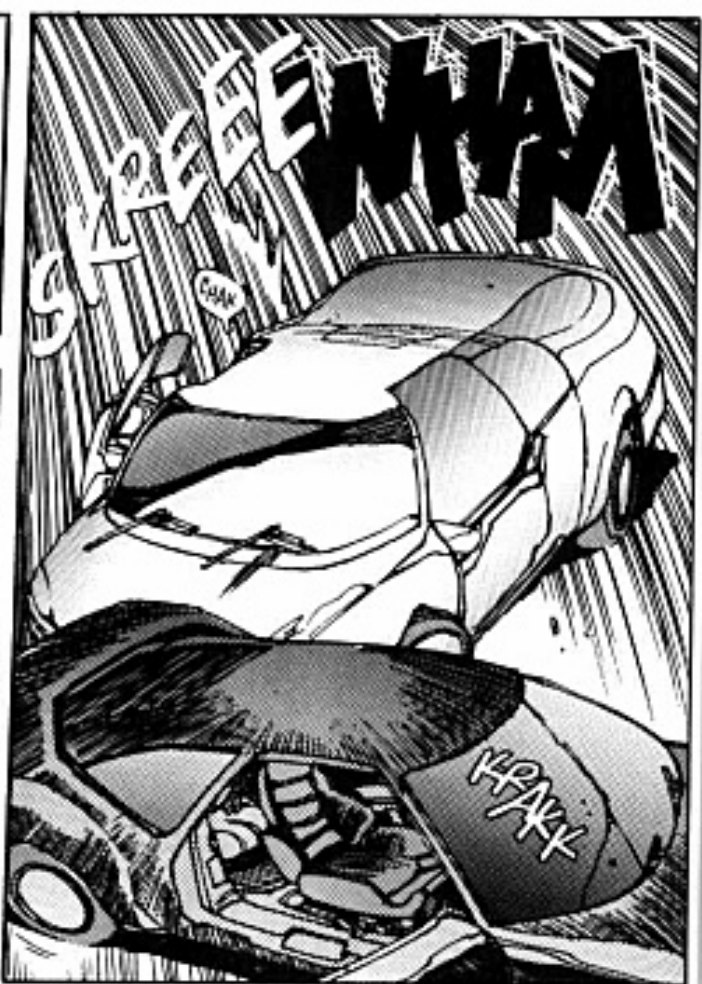
Hurry! Hurry!

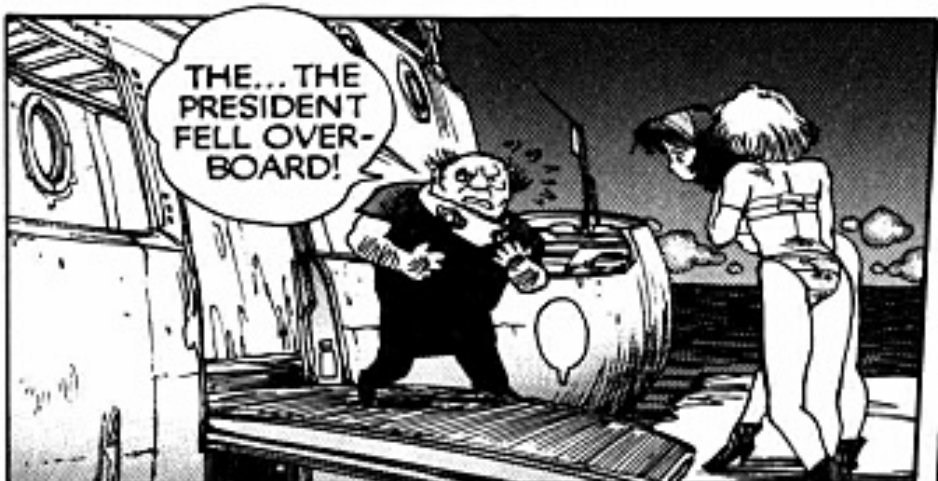
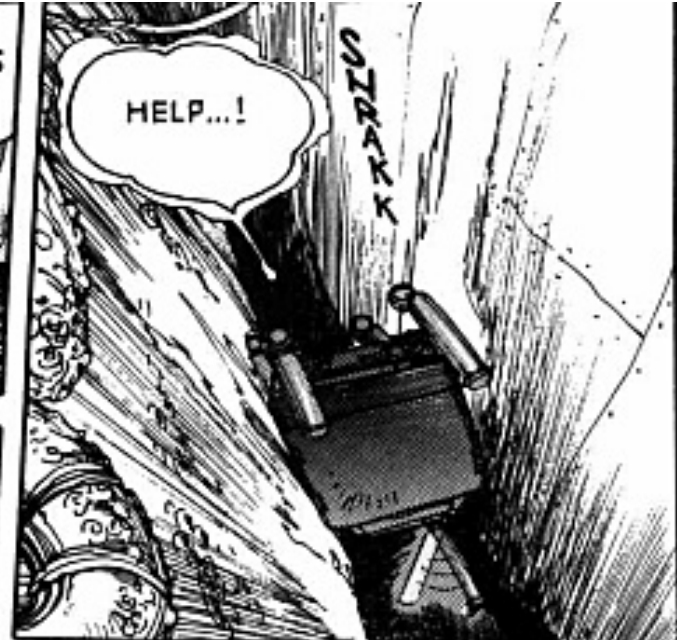


B-BOSS! MAKE THE ROBOTS ATTACK THEM!

DON'T BE AN IDIOT!

YOU WANT TO MAKE THE SITUATION EVEN WORSE?! BESIDES, THEY'RE NOT EVEN COMBAT MODELS...





WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE COAST GUARD, THE PRESIDENT OF HANKA PRECISION INSTRUMENTS WAS SALVAGED AND ARRESTED...



PRESIDENT OF HANKA PRECISION INSTRUMENTS ARRESTED!!

THE PRESIDENT IS COMPLETELY MECHANIZED EXCEPT FOR HIS SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN. AN INVESTIGATION WILL BE CONDUCTED TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS CRIME WAS COMMITTED BY HIS GHOST, OR WHETHER IT WAS A MECHANICAL MALFUNCTION

WELL?

NEXT...



HE APPARENTLY COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH HIS COMPETITORS IN AI DEVELOPMENT...



...SO HE USED THE MOB TO SMUGGLE IN KIDS. HE "EDUCATED" THEM WITH DRUGS, AND TURNED THEM INTO NEAR-ROBOTS.

THEN HE DUBBED THEIR GHOSTS INTO HIS OWN COMPANY'S MACHINES AND GAVE THEM TO SPECIAL CUSTOMERS.

THE HANKA FACILITY WAS BUILT ON THE FORMER SITE OF THE OLD INTELLIGENCE DIVISION'S TRAINING CENTER... AND THE HEAD OF THE CENTER WHEN IT MOVED, COLONEL, WAS NONE OTHER THAN YOU...

COME ON, NOW... I WAS AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE HANKA MONITORING COMMITTEE, SO PROTOTYPES WERE NATURALLY SENT TO ME FOR EVALUATION, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HOW THEY WERE MANUFACTURED!

heh heh

AND I WAS ONE OF THOSE "SPECIAL CUSTOMERS"?

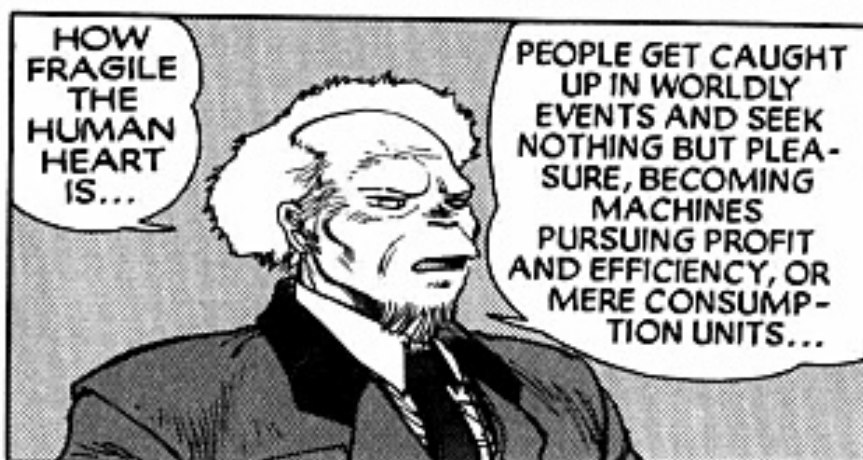






WELL! NOW THAT WE'VE SOLVED ONE CASE, IT SURE WOULD BE NICE TO GET TWO OR THREE DAYS OF VACATION....

AND I'VE GOT FOUR DAYS PENDING...



HOW FRAGILE THE HUMAN HEART IS...

PEOPLE GET CAUGHT UP IN WORLDLY EVENTS AND SEEK NOTHING BUT PLEASURE, BECOMING MACHINES PURSUING PROFIT AND EFFICIENCY, OR MERE CONSUMPTION UNITS...

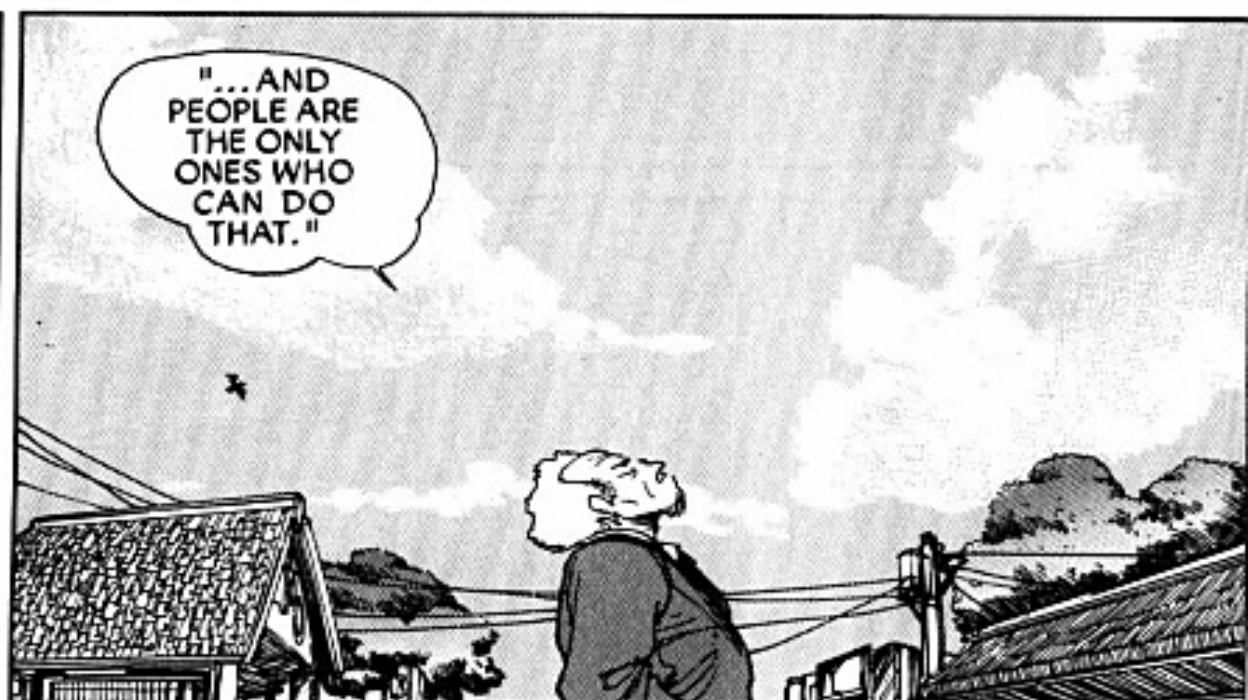


WHY SO PHILOSOPHICAL ALL OF A SUDDEN, CHIEF?

I'M GOING TO GET OLD SOMEDAY, TOO....



AS AN ADVENTURER ONCE SAID LONG AGO: "SOMETIMES PEOPLE NEED TIME JUST TO STOP AND THINK..."



"...AND PEOPLE ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN DO THAT."



SAY, CHIEF...

ABOUT MY PAID VACATION...

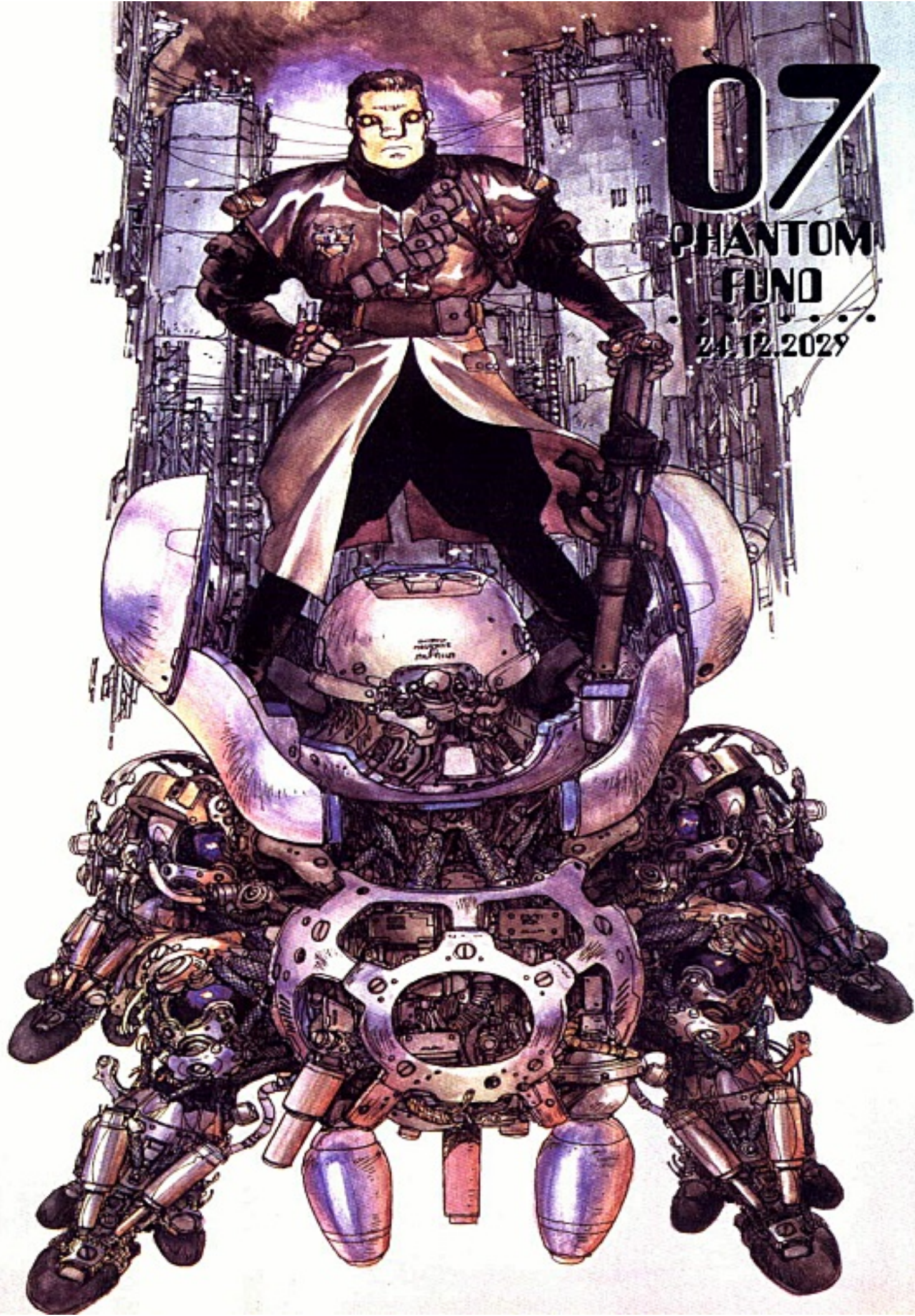
RIGHT-- I ALMOST FORGOT.

HERE... YOU'RE TO LEAVE TOMORROW MORNING FOR TWO MONTHS TRAINING WITH THE SAS. TRY TO COME BACK ALIVE.

07

PHANTOM
FUND

24.12.2029





MAGAZINE SAME AS THE FN-P90.



Huh?! ONLY THE BRAIN'S BEEN ACTIVATED?

HMM... NO BARRIER?!

Huh?! ONLY THE BRAIN'S BEEN ACTIVATED?

HMM... NO BARRIER?!

CHIEF'S CALLING... LET'S GO!

WHA--!?

CHIEF'S CALLING... LET'S GO!

WHA--!?

B-BUT I WAS ON THE VERGE OF A PROFOUND INSIGHT!

DAMN ... NO CLEAR DATA RECORD, BUT I KNOW IT WAS SOMETHING *TERRIBLY* PROFOUND!

B-BUT I WAS ON THE VERGE OF A PROFOUND INSIGHT!

DAMN ... NO CLEAR DATA RECORD, BUT I KNOW IT WAS SOMETHING *TERRIBLY* PROFOUND!

YOU **DO** REMEMBER YOUR ROLE AS MY "SUIT," I HOPE...



CHK
CHK
CHK

WHAT
IS IT?!

WE
DEMAND
THE
USE OF
NATURAL
OIL!

YEAH!

TELL
HER!
TELL
HER!



REQUEST
DENIED.

ACK!
ACK!
ACK!

PLEASE!
ANY-
THING
BUT
SYNTHETIC!

FLIP
FLOP
FLIP
FLOP

KICK
KICK

KICK

YOU WANT
PROBLEMS
WITH INSECTS
AND FUNGI AND
SEIZING? QUIT
YOUR BITCHING
AND KEEP UP
THE OBSER-
VATIONS!

BUT
MISTER
BATOU'S
THINK
TANK'S
USING
IT!

snivel,
whine







WELL, COMRADE ARAMAKI... SOMEDAY, WHEN MAGADAN IN SIBERIA'S A GREAT CITY LIKE YOUR FUKUOKA, I'LL INVITE YOU TO VISIT, YES?

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M NOT GOING TO LIVE AS LONG AS METHUSELAH DID...

OUR EXCHANGE DIDN'T BEAR MUCH FRUIT, BUT FOR BOTH OF US. AT LEAST, I THINK IT WAS WORTHWHILE.



IN PARTING, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE PRESENT.



IF YOU MEAN THE CLIPPINGS FROM THE SOYUZ EVENING EDITION, I'VE ALREADY GOT THOSE.



NO. I'M JUST LETTING YOU KNOW THAT MY SUCCESSOR, **ASECHINOV**, IS SOMEONE WHO WASN'T SELECTED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE.



HE GOT HIS JOB THROUGH MONEY LAUNDERED BY GENERAL MARLOV, WHOM I BELIEVE YOU KNOW VERY WELL INDEED.



SINCERE THANKS FOR FINALLY TELLING ME SOMETHING I DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW.

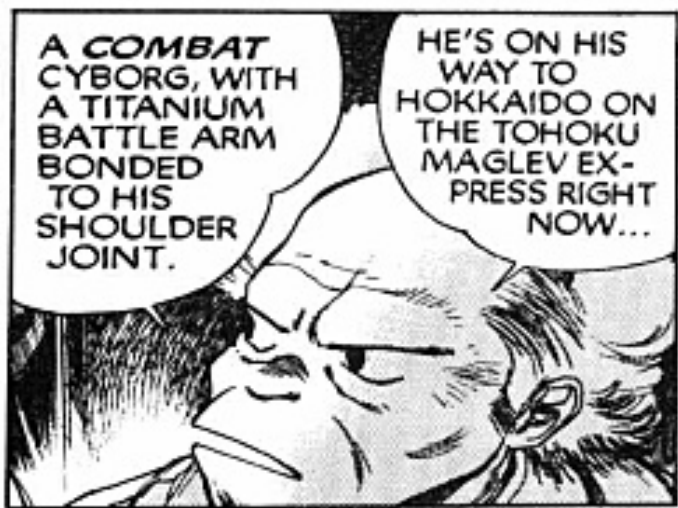


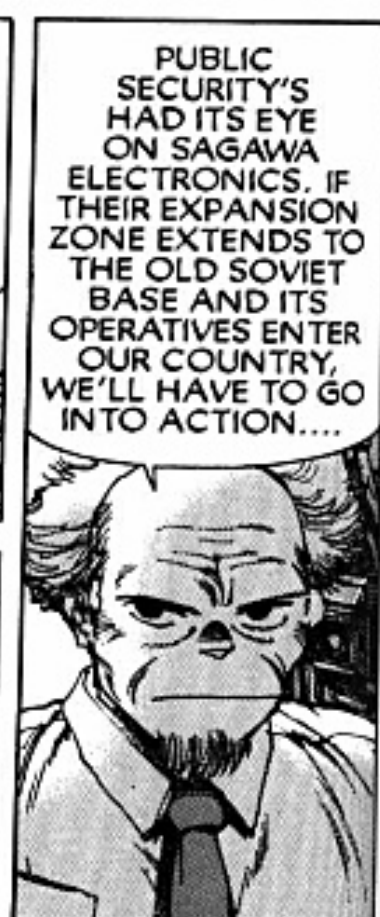
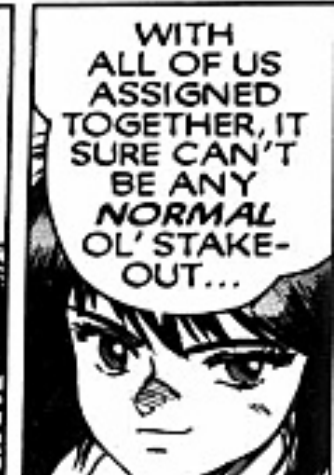
LIES, BUT YOU'RE WELCOME.



ALL TEAM MEMBERS REPORT TO HELI-PORT!

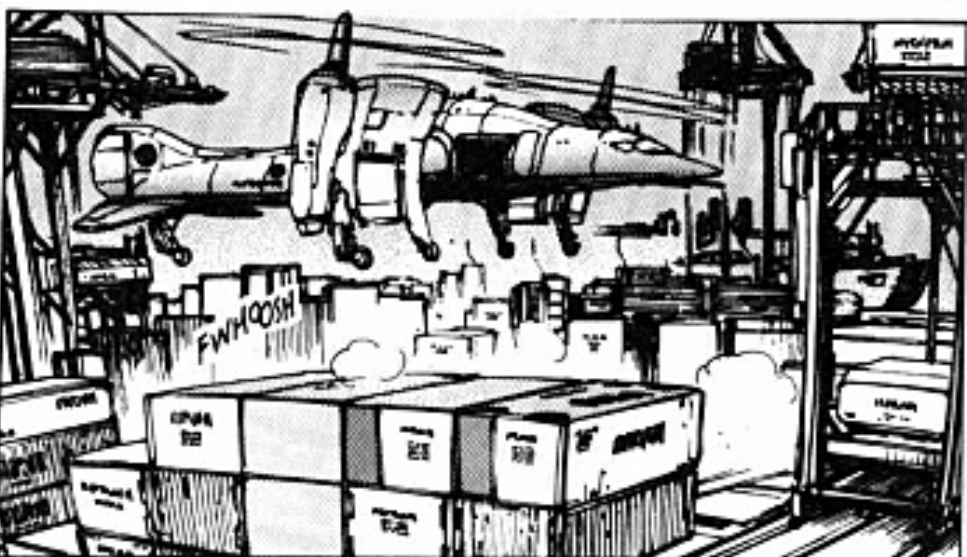
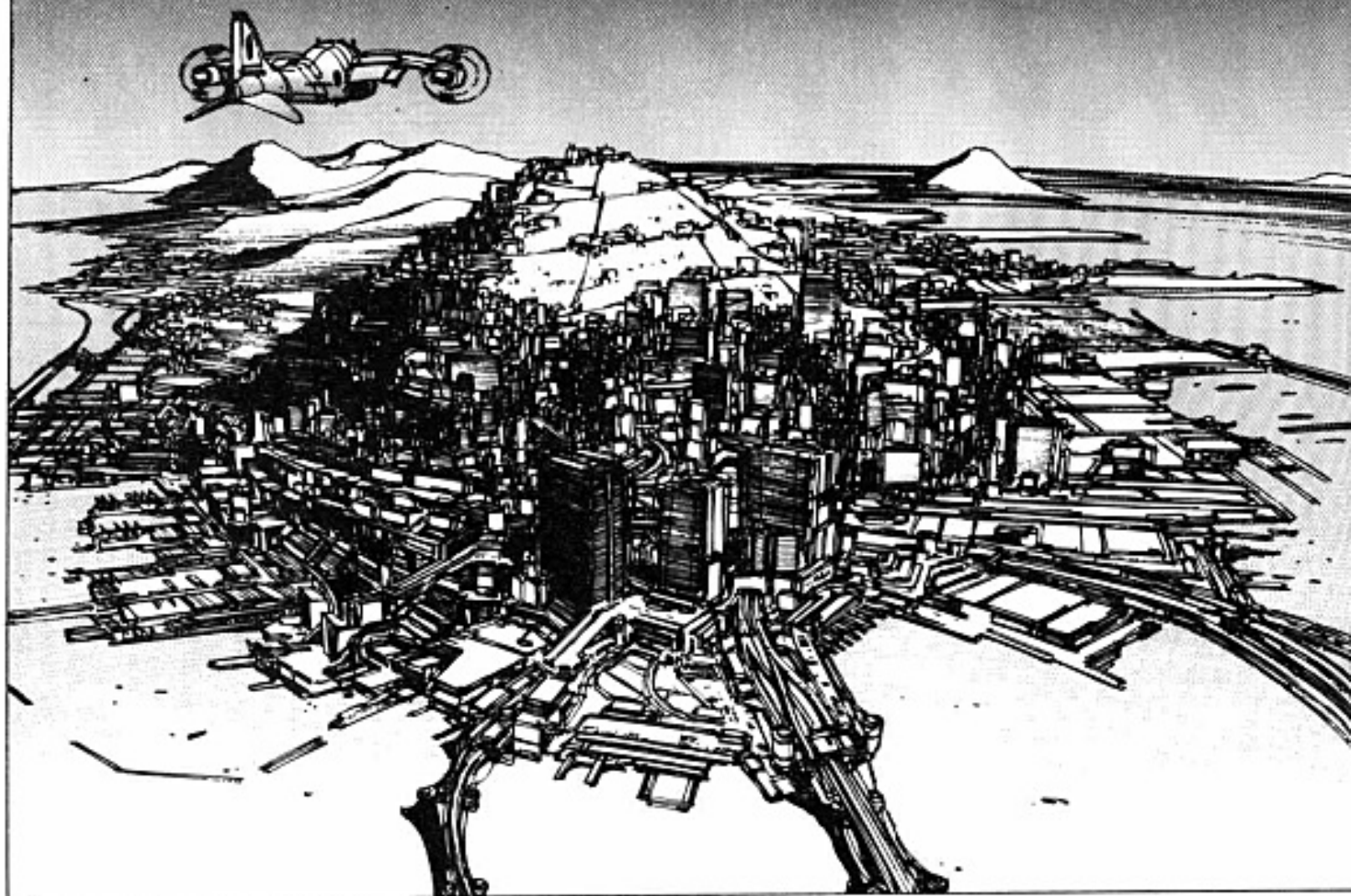
WE'RE FLYING NORTH!

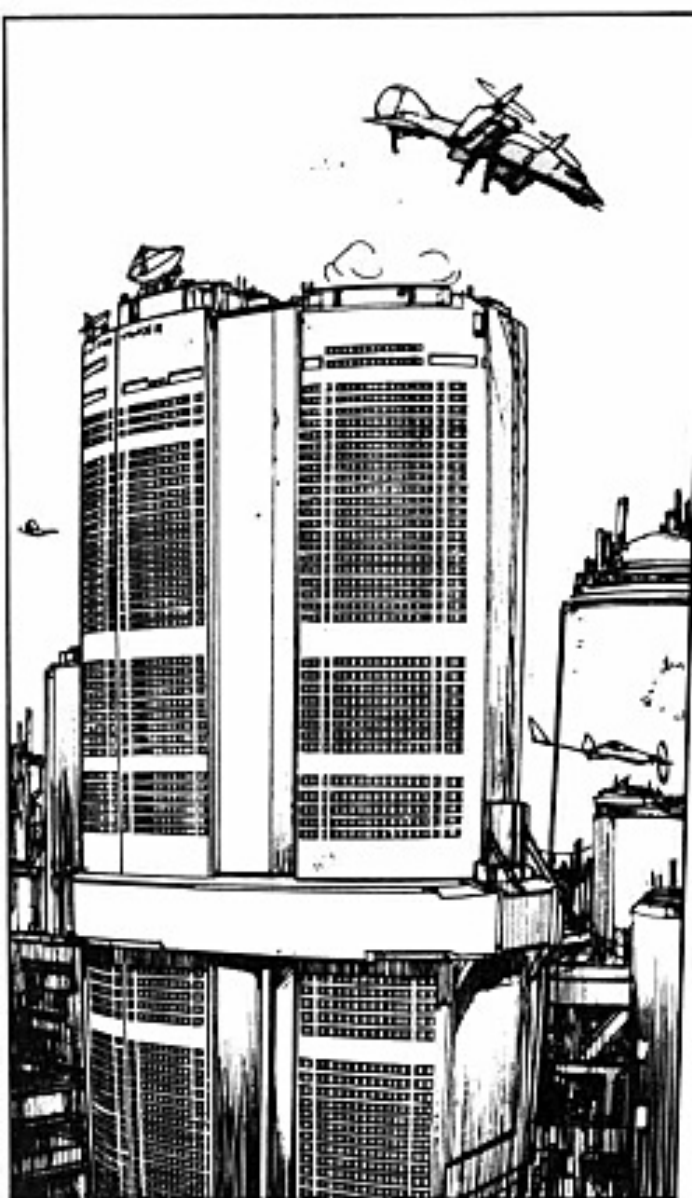
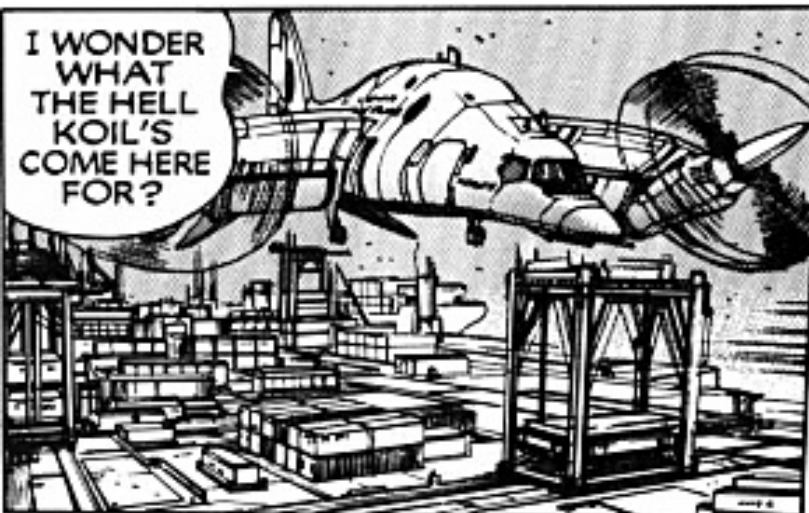


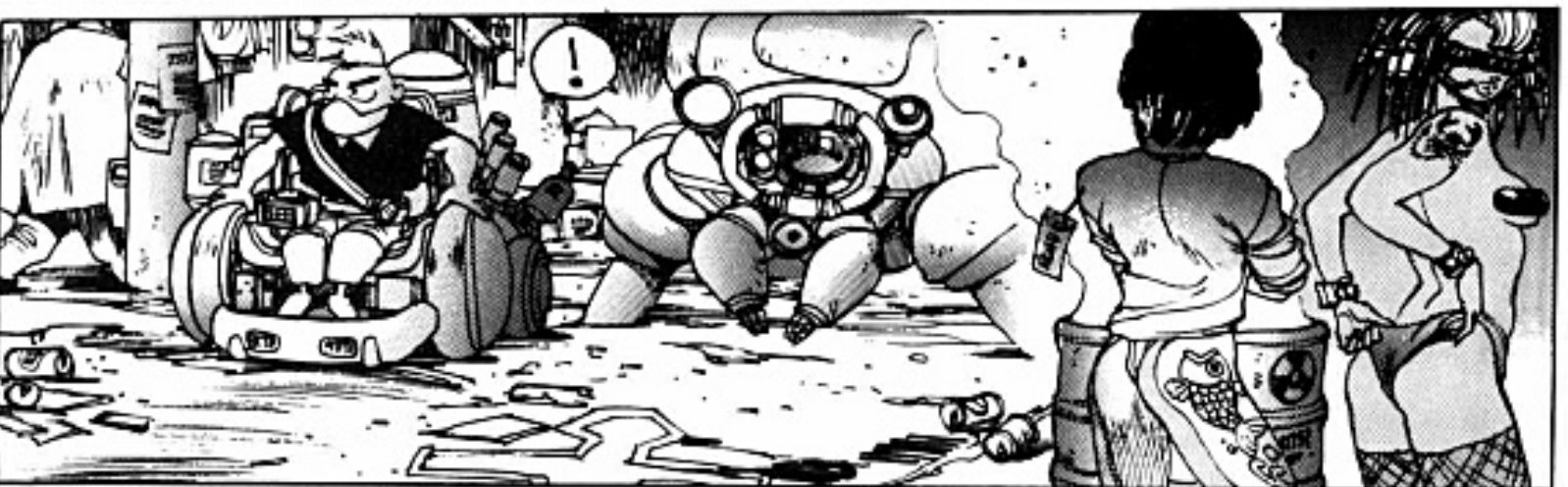


SPAK SPAK SPAK SPANG



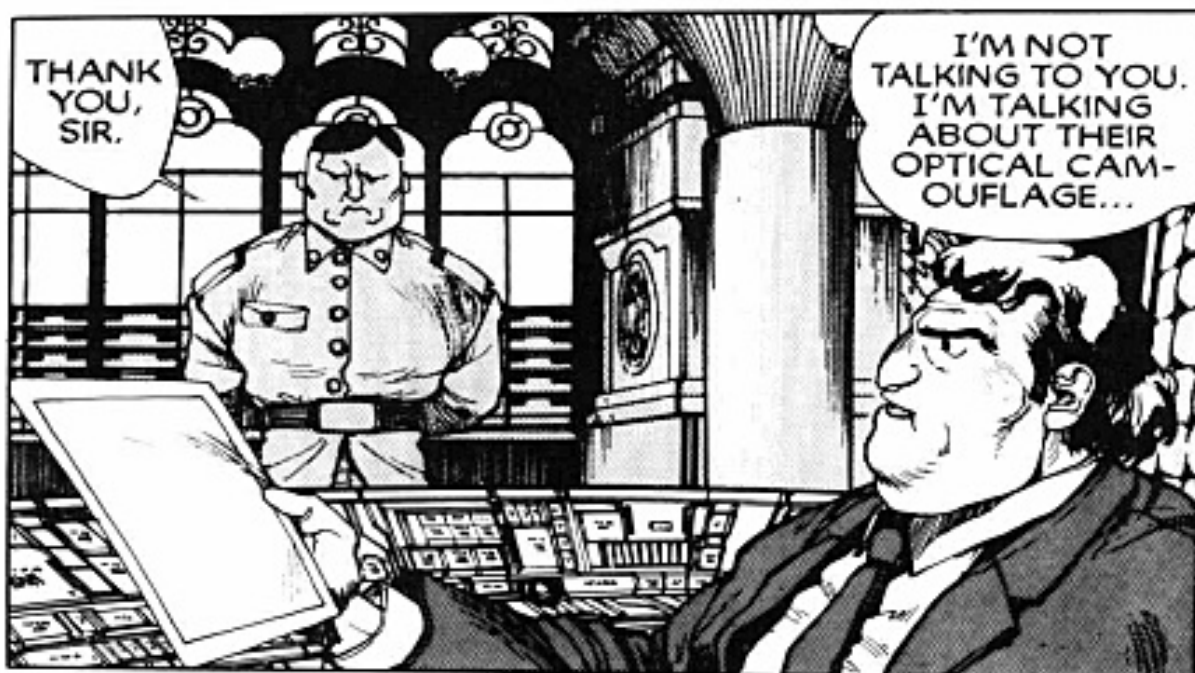








THAT IS
BEAUTI-
FUL...



THANK
YOU,
SIR.

I'M NOT
TALKING TO YOU.
I'M TALKING
ABOUT THEIR
OPTICAL CAM-
OUFLAGE...

IT'S GOT TO BE
KYO-RE 2902 MODEL
OPTO-CAM... IT'S
TOO BAD OUR
SAGAWA OPTICS
HYPER-RES CAMERA
CAN'T HANDLE IT.
WE'VE GOT A REAL
PROBLEM ON OUR
HANDS, NOW....



IF THEY'RE
USING THE 2902,
SIR, THEY'RE
FROM SECTIONS
6 AND 9 OF THE
PUBLIC SECURITY
BUREAU OR
SECTION 4 OF
THE RANGERS.

ALL THOSE
GROUPS REPORT
DIRECTLY TO THE
PRIME MINISTER,
AND ARE THERE-
FORE IMMUNE TO
NORMAL PRES-
SURE TACTICS.



LISTEN--
THE ONLY
ONES IMMUNE
TO PRESSURE
ARE THE HEADS
OF THE UNIONS
MANIPULATING
PARLIAMENT...

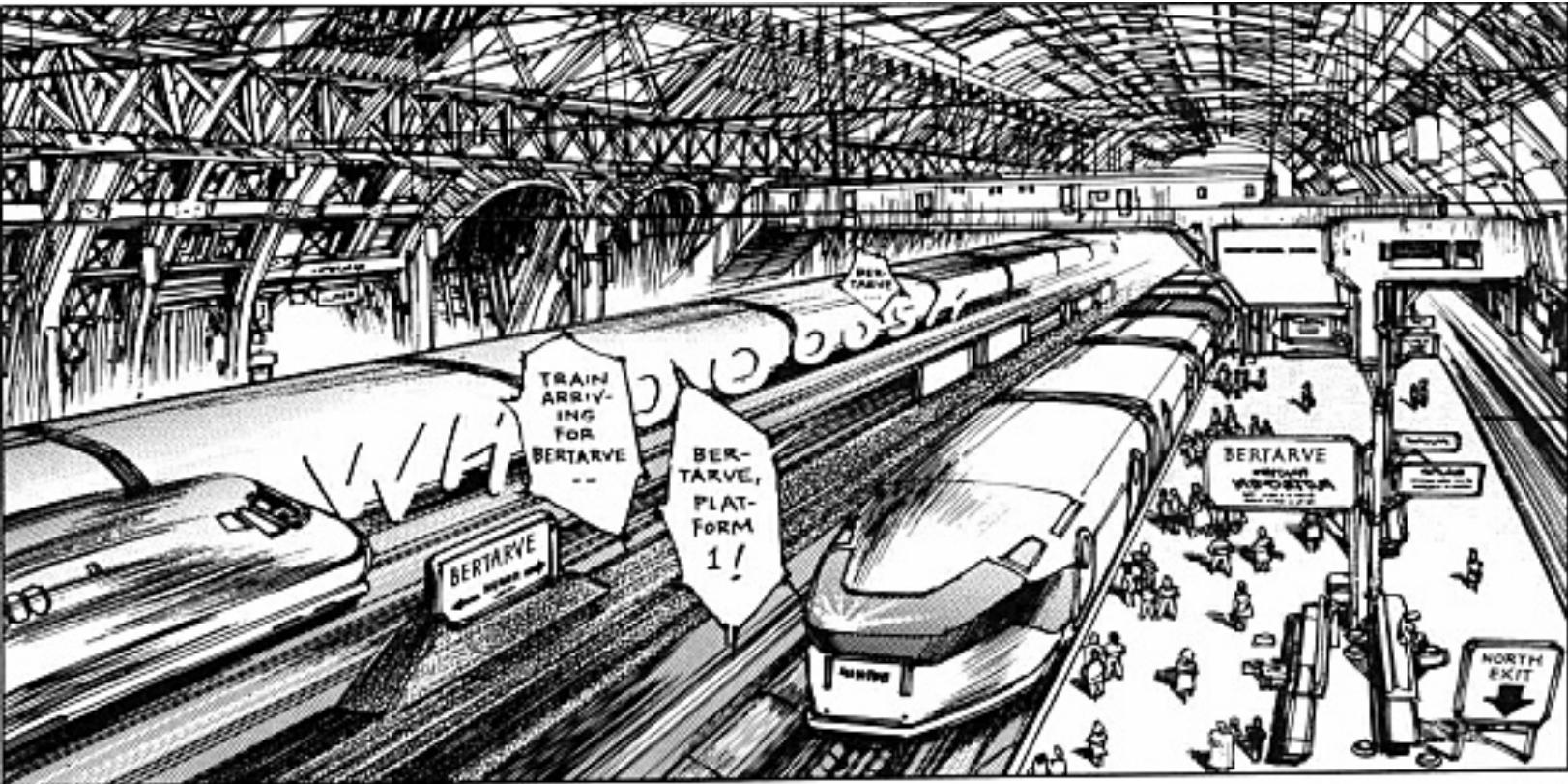
ALL
THIS STUFF
ABOUT
"REPORTING
DIRECTLY TO
THE PRIME
MINISTER" IS
JUST ON
PAPER.



SO
GET
WITH
IT.

TIME'S
OUR
ENEMY.

YESSIR.



IN THE
BATH-
ROOM,
EH...



POOR
YANO....

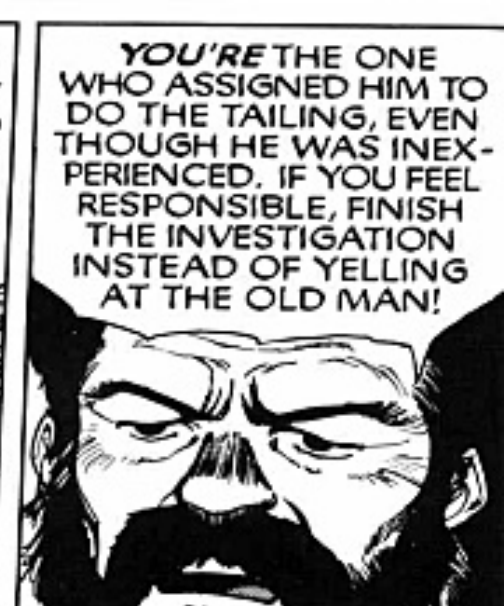


IF THAT
DAMN KOIL'S
IN SUCH A
HURRY, HE'S
GOING TO
TERMINATE
WHOEVER'S
TAILING
HIM...

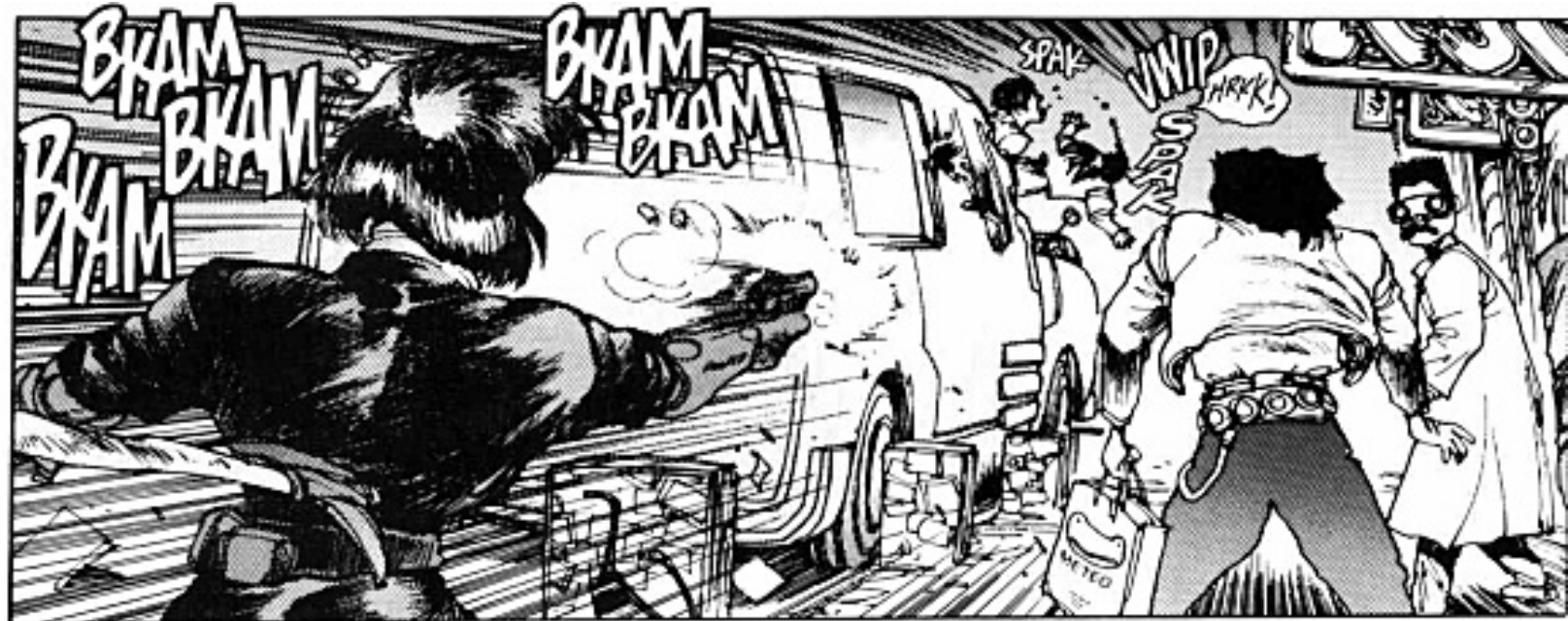
... WE'VE GOTTA
LET EVERYONE
KNOW QUICK, OR
ELSE. LET'S HEAD
STRAIGHT TO THE
UNDERGROUND
FACTORY.



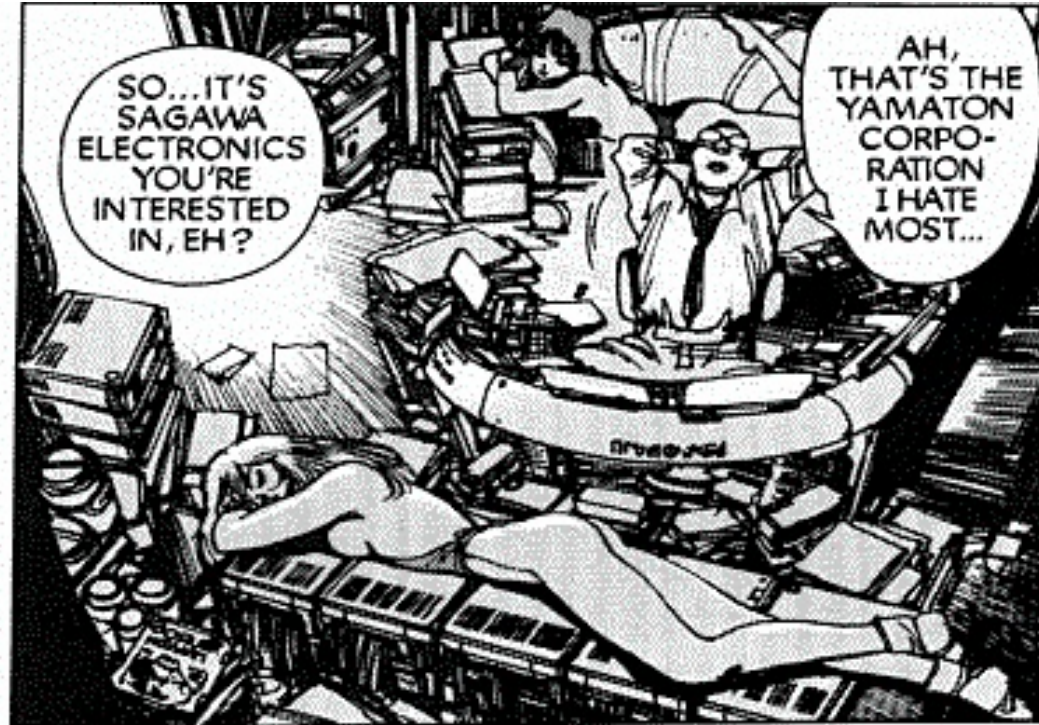
BATOU...





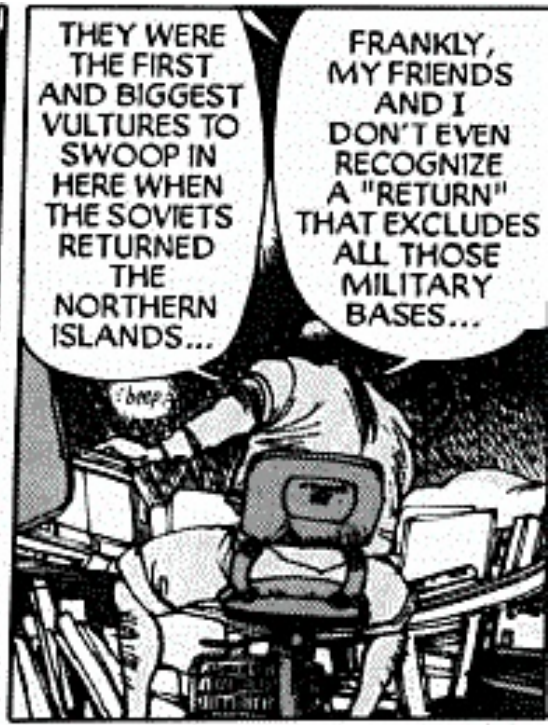






SO...IT'S
SAGAWA
ELECTRONICS
YOU'RE
INTERESTED
IN, EH?

AH,
THAT'S THE
YAMATON
CORPORATION
I HATE
MOST...



THEY WERE
THE FIRST
AND BIGGEST
VULTURES TO
SWOOP IN
HERE WHEN
THE SOVIETS
RETURNED
THE
NORTHERN
ISLANDS...

FRANKLY,
MY FRIENDS
AND I
DON'T EVEN
RECOGNIZE
A "RETURN"
THAT EXCLUDES
ALL THOSE
MILITARY
BASES...



SURE, I KNOW THE
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT
COALITION HAD INTRO-
DUCED A FAILED TAX
POLICY, THAT THERE WAS A
PUBLIC REACTION TO IT,
AND THAT THE OPPOSITION
JUST HAPPENED TO NEED
SOME SORT OF "EVENT"
TO GAIN POWER...

tak
takka
tak

...I ALSO KNOW
THE SOVIETS WANTED
CLOSER LINKS TO JAPAN
BECAUSE THEIR ENTRY
INTO THE EC MARKET
THROUGH THE GERMAN
CONNECTION HADN'T
PRODUCED THE HOPED-
FOR ECONOMIC
BENEFITS...



OH, YEAH,
AND THE
MOSLEMS
HAD SLOWLY
BEEN APPLYING
PRESSURE ON
THE SOVIETS
FROM THE
SOUTH...

OH, BEEP
AH, HERE
WE GO!
ACCESS!

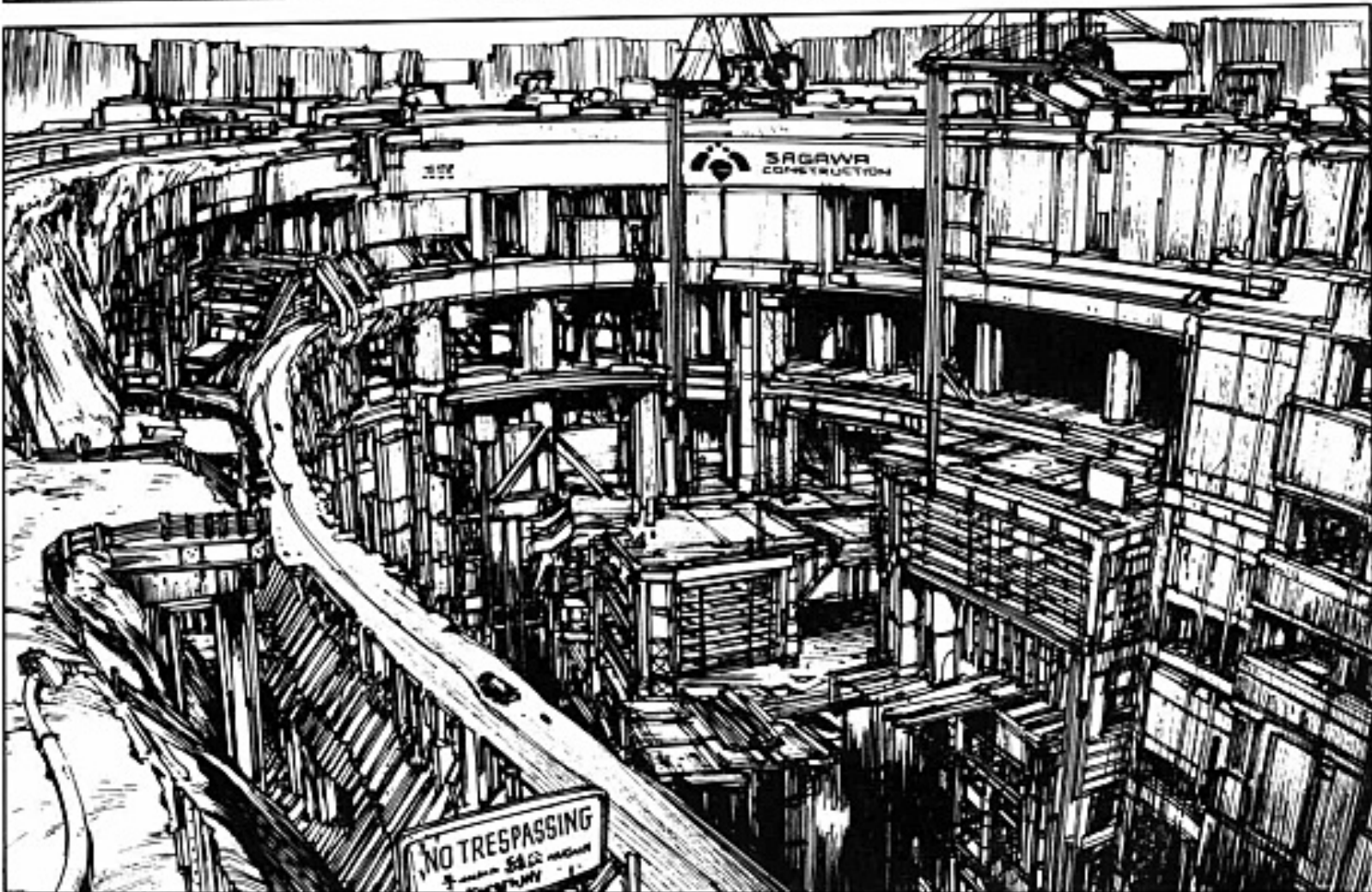


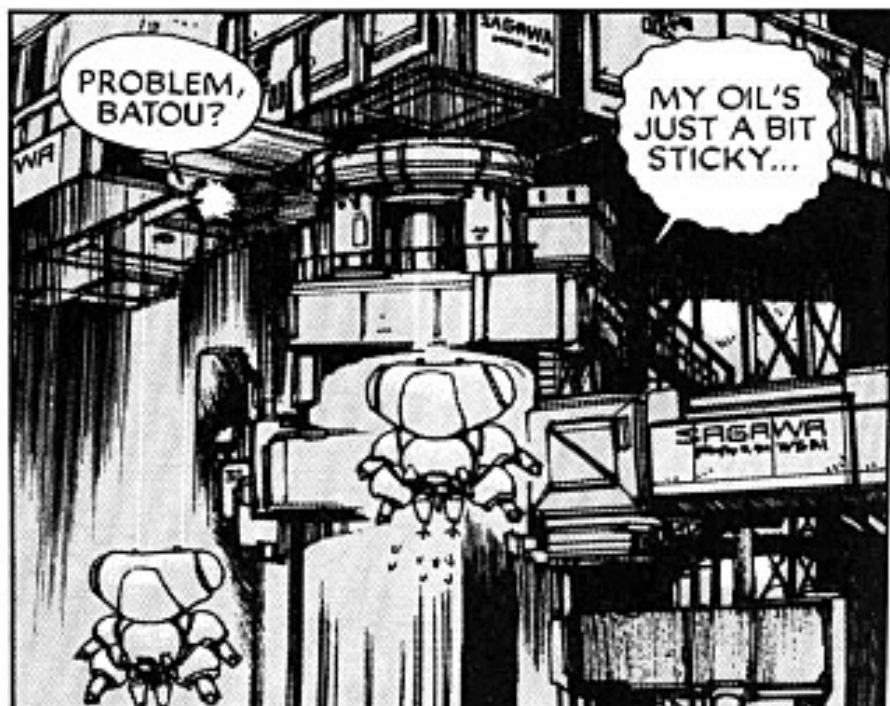
OKAY, GOT
A DIRECT LINK
TO THE HEAD
OF SECURITY'S
BRAIN AT
SAGAWA
ELECTRONICS
HEADQUAR-
TERS.

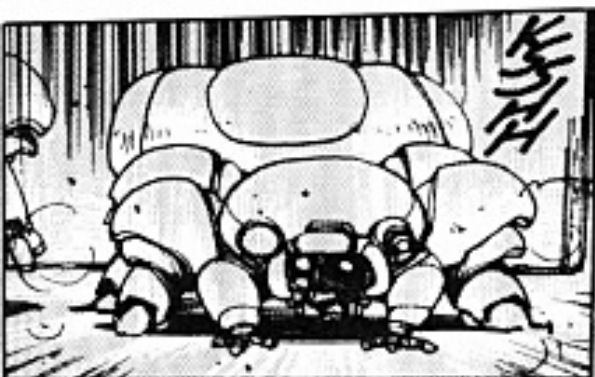
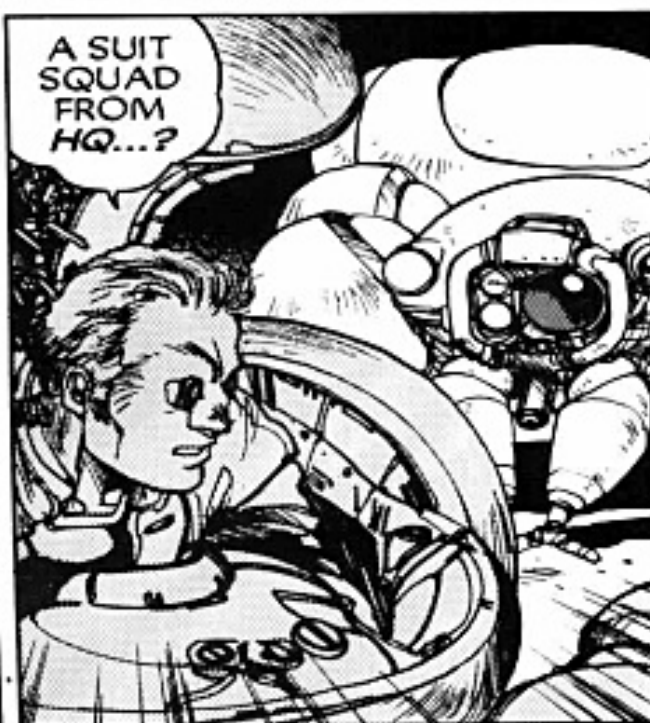
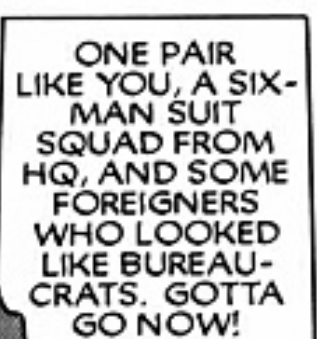
SO, YOU
WANT A
MAP OF
THE SECUR-
ITY NET?
AN ALL-
AREAS
PASS
CARD?

KROLDEN,
YOU SHOULD
NEVER HAVE
QUIT YOUR
JOB AT THE
CABINET PR
OFFICE...

THAT A
COMPLI-
MENT?







LET'S
MOVE
OR WE'RE
UP THE
CREEK!

ROGER!

whsshh

THEY'RE
REALLY
GOING
AT IT!

*SPAK
WHDD*

WHIP

WHAK

YO W

WHAT'S
GOIN'
ON
WITH
THIS
JUNK
HEAP?!

THE
BRAKE
UNIT
ON MY
"THREAD"
HAS
SEIZED,
SIR...

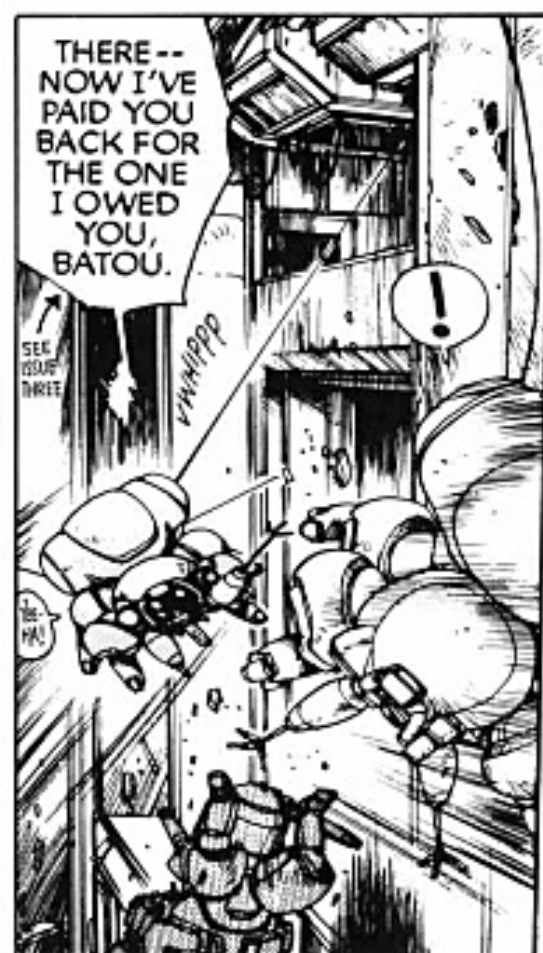
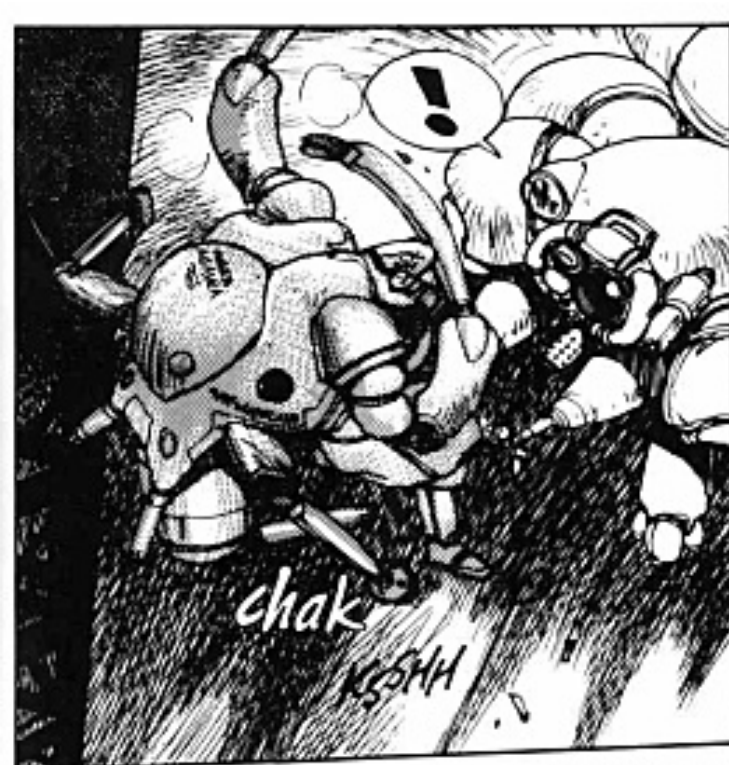
YOU
TURNED
ON YOUR
HEATER,
RIGHT?

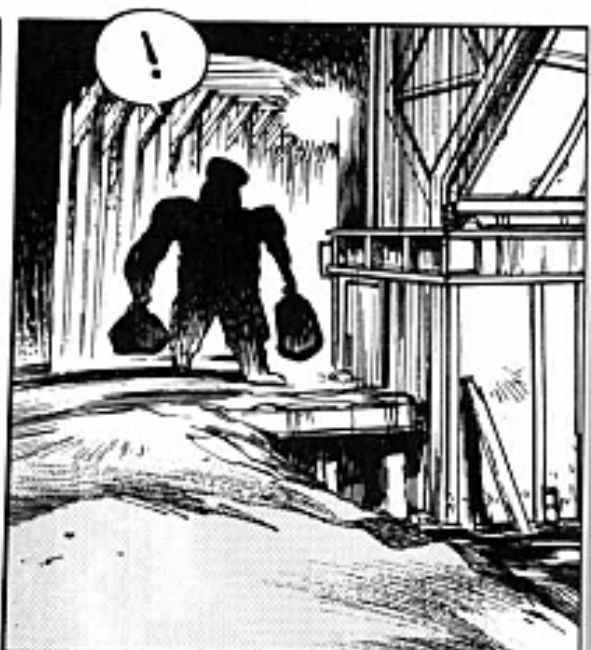
ZRRKKK

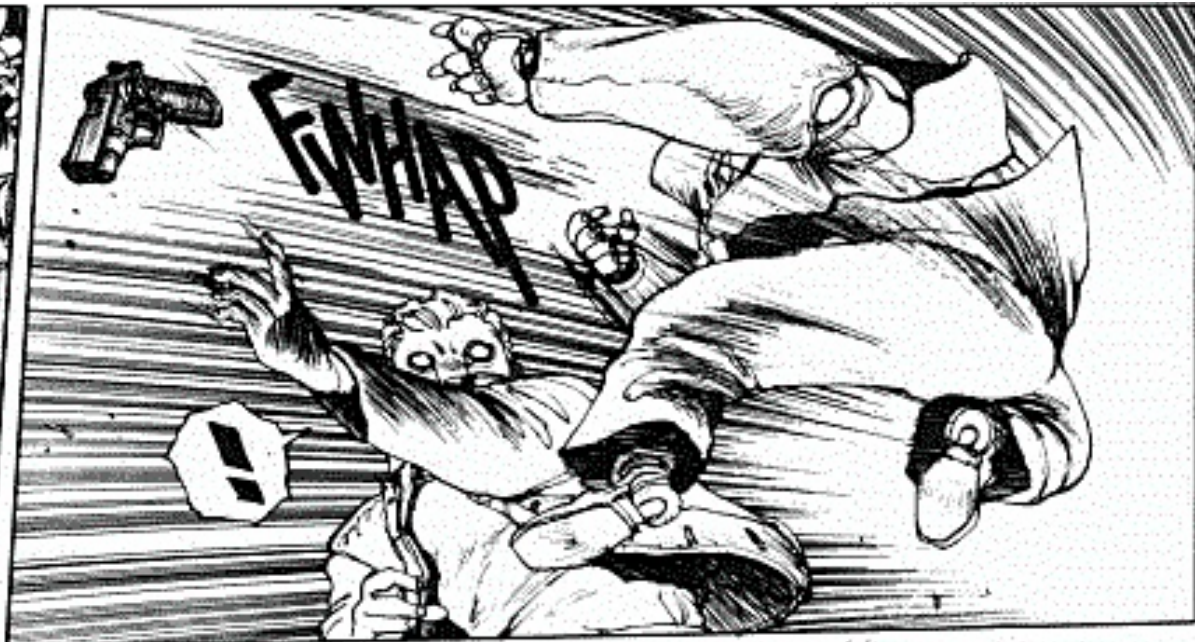
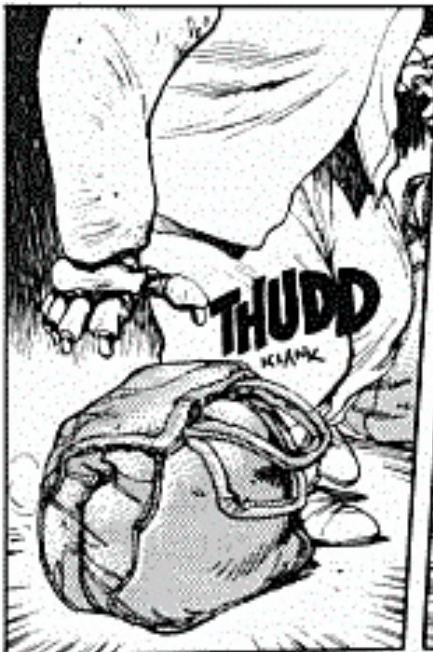
THE DIL
AROUND
MY
HEATER
UNIT HAS
DECOM-
POSED,
SIR...

YAAEE!

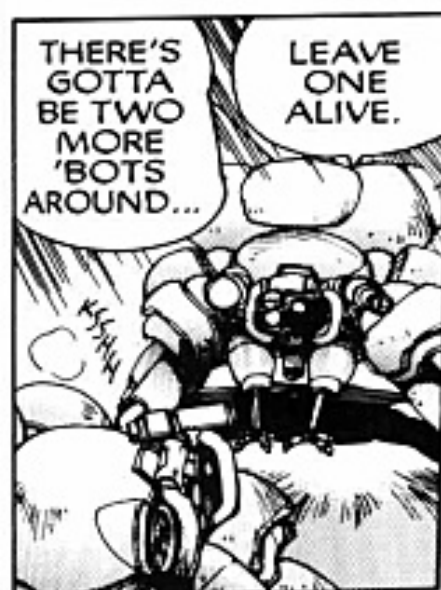
BOOM







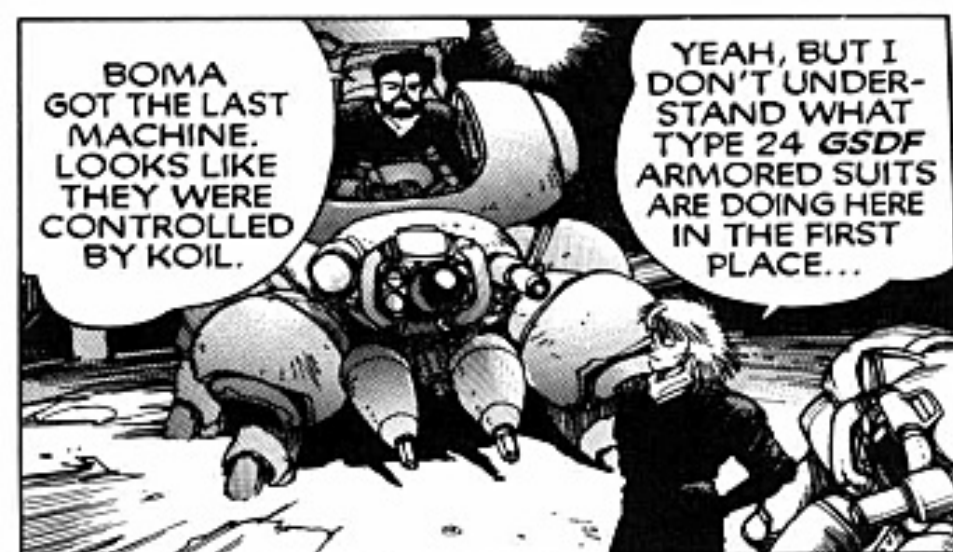
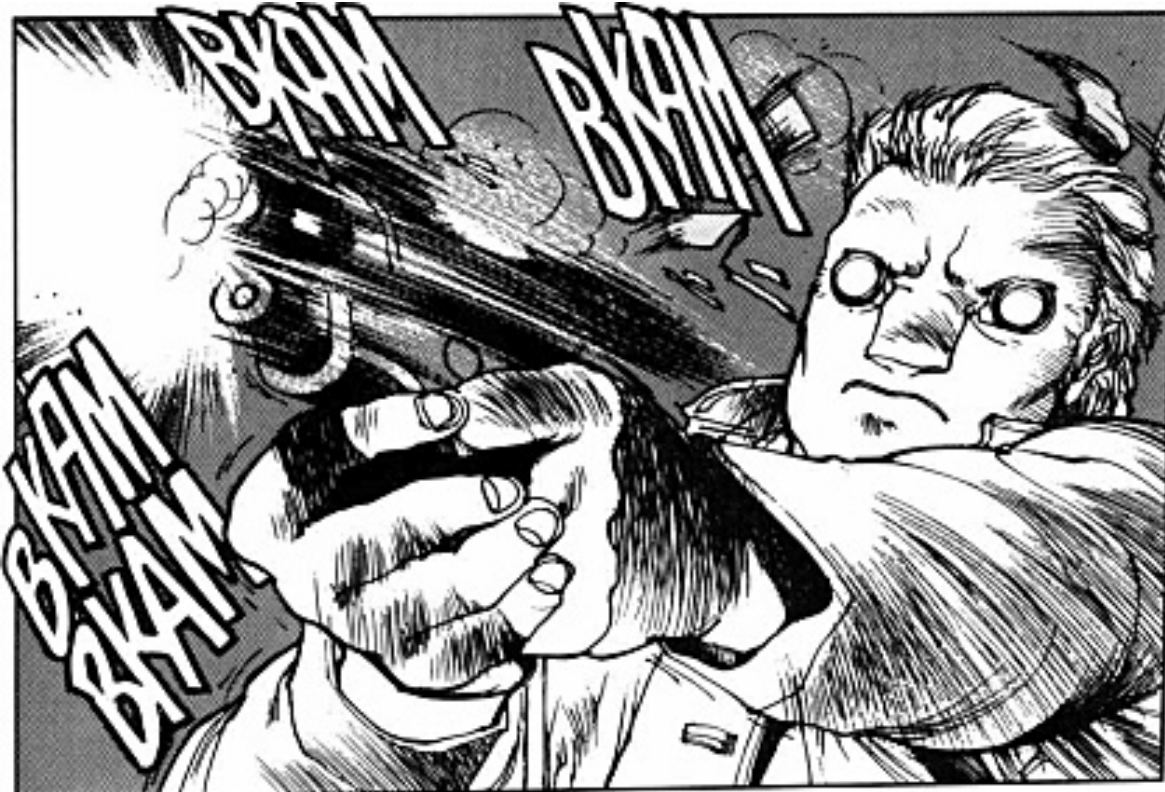




BATOU!
YOU
OKAY?!

SHHANG





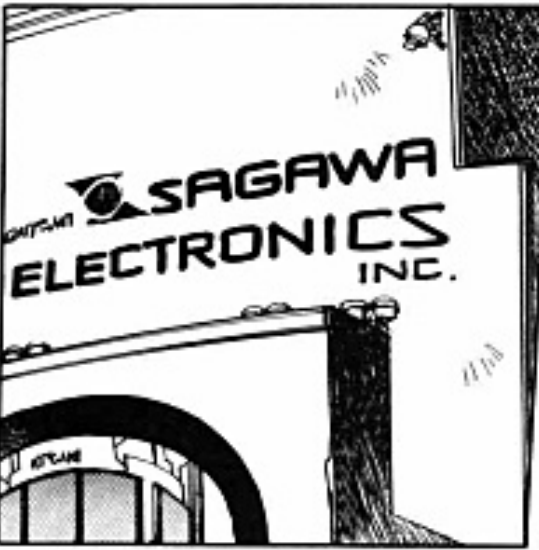
COME TO THINK OF IT, I HEARD THAT AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF GOLD FLOWED OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION AT THE END OF THE CENTURY...

LEMMIE SEE!

OKAY, BUT WHY WOULD IT BE HERE?!

AND WHY DID SAGAWA ELECTRONICS AND THE GSDF KNOW ABOUT IT?

WHAT THE HELL ARE ALL THESE GOLD BARS?



WHY DON'T YOU JUST HACK INTO IT FROM OUTSIDE?

BECAUSE I'D BE BRANCHED, AND MY EXPENSIVE OL' BODY'D BE DEFENSELESS...



BE
CAREFUL,
MA'AM...



I
WILL.



HI! I'M THE
PHOTOGRAPHER
FOR THE ANNUAL
REPORT. I'VE GOT
A PASS FOR THE
SHOOT BUT I JUST
CAME TODAY TO
CHECK OUT THE
LOCATION...

YOU
CAN GO
RIGHT ON
INTO THE
PRESIDENT'S
OFFICE...



SAY, CHIEF,
HAVE WE
GOT A PHOTOGRAPHER
SCHEDULED FOR TODAY
IN THE SECURITY
LOG?

ARE YOU LOSING
YOUR MARBLES?
THAT'S THE DAUGHTER
OF THE MAN
FROM KAMIZAWA
PHOTO STUDIO.
HE'S BEEN
COMING HERE
FOR FORTY
YEARS.



GEEZ, THEY'VE
AUTOMATED THIS
PLACE TO THE
MAX. LOOK AT
THAT BUM,
THOUGH--
CAMPING HERE
RIGHT UNDER
THE EYES OF
ALL THESE
STUPID
MACHINES...

TWO BAD
HE CAN'T
MAKE A
LIVING
WITH HIS
BRAINS...



WONDER IF I SHOULD BREAK INTO THE INFORMATION PROCESSING CENTER, OR THE MEMORY MANAGEMENT CENTER....

HMM... I'D BETTER DIRECTLY INFILTRATE A COUPLE CHIEF EXEC'S' BRAINS... IT'D BE FASTER...

WHA-?!
SECTION 4
IT'S LOCKED!

ATTENTION, PERSON EXHIBITING SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR AT INTER-SECTION 9972.

PLEASE SHOW YOUR I.D. AND PASS!

WELL, I... ER...

DAMN!

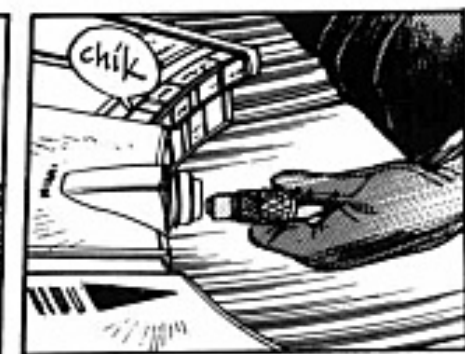
SQUEEE!

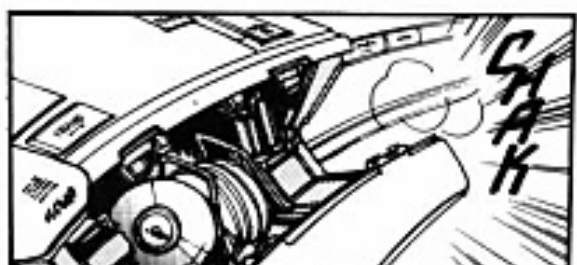
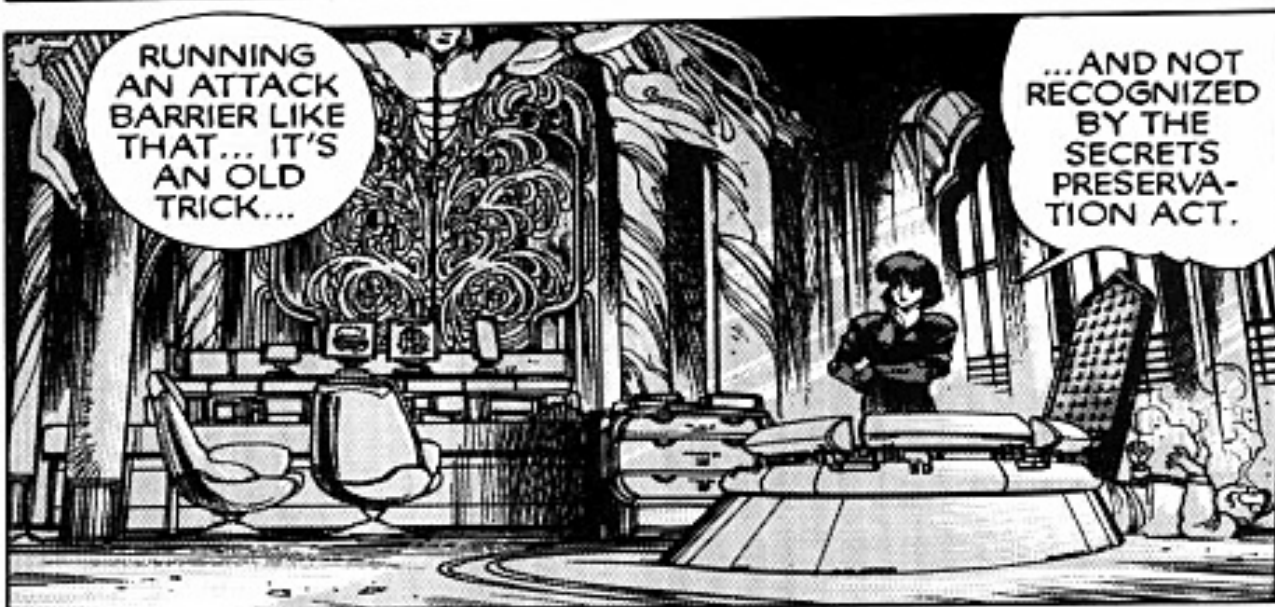
BKAM
BKAM

AND AFTER I WENT TO ALL THAT TROUBLE TO GET A FREE PASS... WHAT AN IDIOT I AM...

MAYBE I'D BETTER LEAVE THIS PART OUT OF MY REPORT...





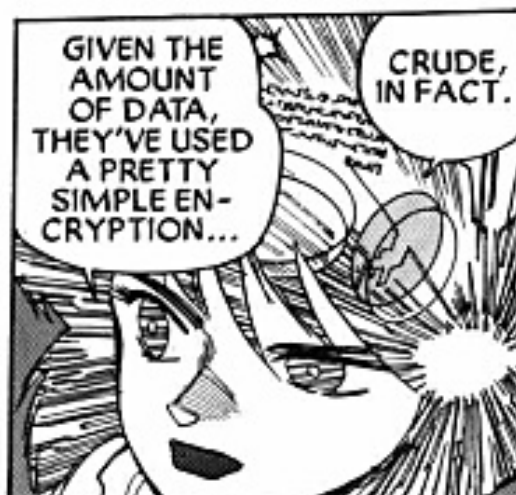


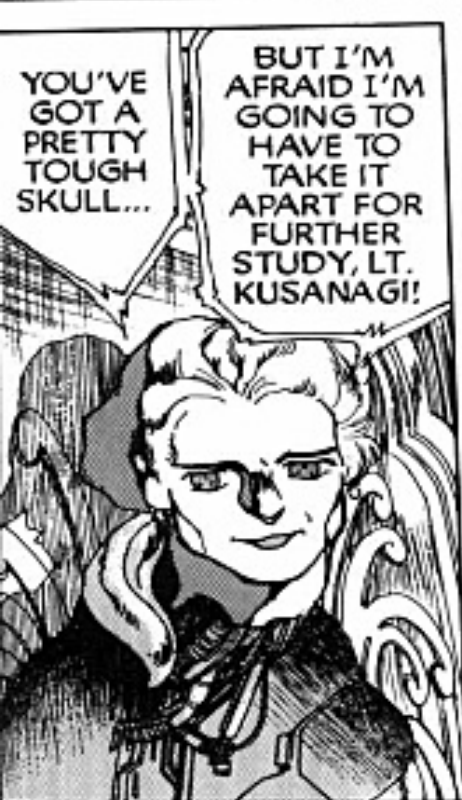


"3/5/1998, SELL
B ZONE TO K,
(M)...5/7/1998,
SELL L ZONE
TO M, (K)..."

"9/13/1998,
SELL L ZONE
TO K, (M)...
12/2/1998..."

WHAT
THE
HELL IS
THIS?







AND JUST FYI, I'M NO LONGER A LIEUTENANT...

IT'S MAJOR KUSANAGI TO YOU...!



WHA-?! EVEN YOUR PRESSURE MARKS ON THE FLOOR ARE GONE!

HOW'D YOU--?



THANKS FOR THE DISKS!

NOW YOUR OWN COUNTRY'S GOING TO BE AFTER YOU! I'LL SAVE THE SPARRING 'TIL THE NEXT TIME WE MEET.

NYA HA HA HA HA HA



!

STAY ALIVE UNTIL YOU RETIRE, KAGASAKI! THAT'LL MAKE OUR LITTLE GAME MORE INTERESTING...

AND EASIER TO WRAP UP.



YOU'RE ON THE WALL, AREN'T YOU?!

COME TO THINK OF IT, I'D BETTER SCRAM, TOO...



!!

FMP



WE RECEIVED
A NOTICE FROM
THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY ABOUT
THAT INCIDENT
THE OTHER DAY,
ARAMAKI.

ASECHINOV,
THE CULTURAL
ATTACHE AT
THE SOVIET
EMBASSY, WAS
SUMMONED
HOME.

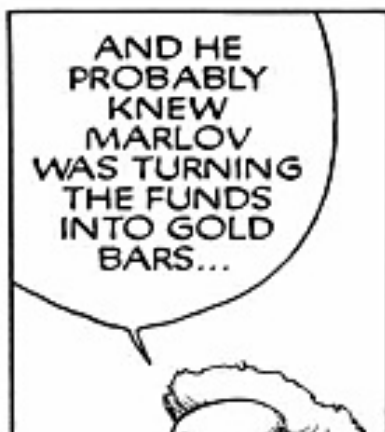
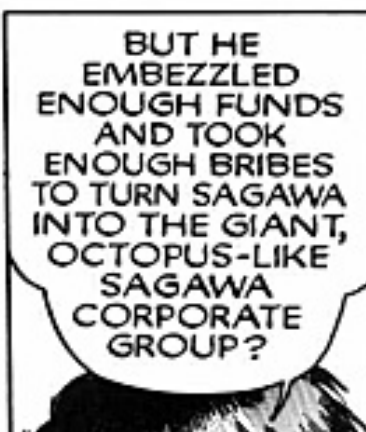
AS YOU
KNOW,
RECALLING
DIPLOMATS IS
SOMETHING
BOTH OF OUR
NATIONS
WISH TO
AVOID...

SO TELL
ME, WHY
WERE YOU
FOLKS
OPERATING
IN THE
FAR NORTH,
ANYWAY...?

BECAUSE
OF THE SINKING
GEOFONT, SIR.
WHILE WE WERE
MOUNTING A
RESCUE MISSION,
WE ACCIDENTALLY
CAME ACROSS THE
GOLD INGOTS...

DID
YOU,
INDEED...

WELL, THE
SECRETARY OF
THE SOVIET UNION
MUST HAVE BEEN
QUITE SURPRISED
WHEN THOSE
GOLD BARS WERE
RETURNED TO
HIM...



I GUESS THE
CENTRAL COM-
MITTEE DIDN'T WANT
MARLOV TO GET
HOLD OF THAT
MONEY AND WIN IN
THE NEXT ELECTION,
HMM?

THEY MUST
HAVE SENSED
WHAT HE WAS UP
TO, AND THEN SET
US UP TO DO THE
DIRTY WORK FOR
THEM... TAKE CARE
OF THEIR LITTLE
PROBLEM.

BY THE
WAY... WHAT'S
THIS I HEAR
ABOUT YANO'S
FAMILY'S BANK
ACCOUNT BEING
FATTENED TO
THE TUNE OF
ONE GOLD
INGOT?

WELL...
UH... THINK
OF IT AS A
POSTHUMOUS
APOLOGY
FROM
KOIL...

WELL,
IN THAT
CASE,
OKAY.

JUST
DON'T
PUT IT IN
YOUR
REPORT.

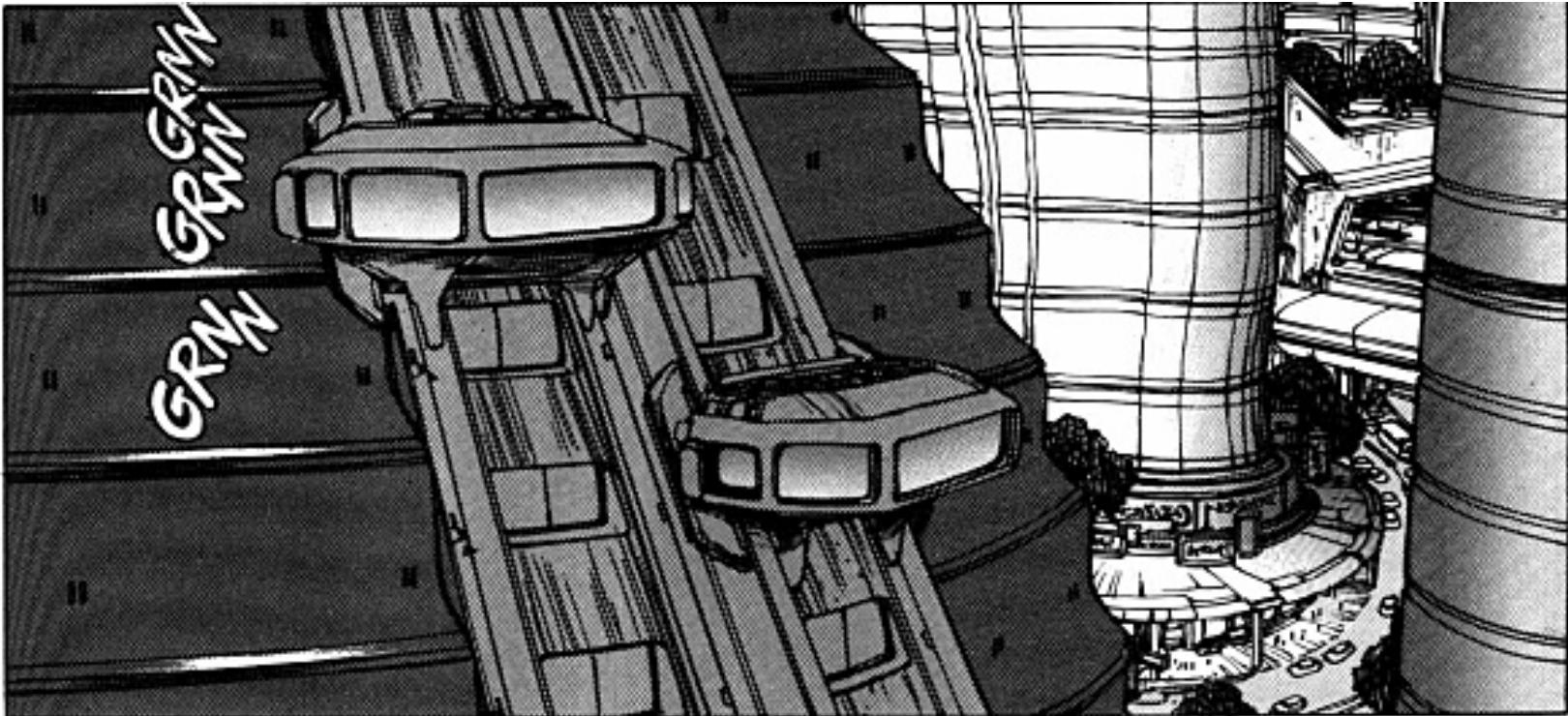
IT'S BEEN
TWENTY
MINUTES SINCE
BATOU WENT
TO MEET YANO'S
FAMILY. GO
GET HIM...

OKAY...

...BUT
I DON'T
KNOW
WHAT TO
SAY.

SAME
HERE.





WE'RE ONLY IN THIS FOR THE THRILLS, THE MONEY, AND THE BEST BODY MAINTENANCE POSSIBLE, SO THEY AT LEAST OUGHT TO PAY US BETTER...



IT'S YANO'S BROTHER...

DAMN... NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I GO THROUGH THIS, I'LL NEVER GET USED TO IT...

WAS THERE ANY OTHER CHOICE THIS TIME, THOUGH?

IT'S ONLY HUMAN TO THINK THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN....

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDING ME!

HERE-- A PRESENT! CANDY FOR THE PRETTY LADY!

CHECK OUT THIS OLD FELLER WE...UH... WE FOUND IN A GARBAGE DUMP!

YEP, THAT'S RIGHT, SONNY-- WHEN THE RUSSIAN SUPER-CRUISER **PIROSHKI** ENGAGED US THAT TIME, I FIGGERED I WAS A GONER FOR SURE...! BWA HA HA HA!

HEY, YOU'VE TOLD US THE SAME STORY 249 TIMES ALREADY, YA OLD FART!